Senate Widens Scope of Energy Bill to Include Carbon-Negative Technologies

BERKELEY (May 4, 2016) — The Senate recently passed two amendments to support the development of carbon removal solutions in the Senate’s Bipartisan Energy Bill: S.2012 - The Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016. The amendments focus on two carbon-negative energy technologies: bioenergy with carbon capture and storage and direct air capture and sequestration. According to Noah Deich, Executive Director of Center for Carbon Removal, “These amendments are an important recognition from the Senate on the need for negative emissions technologies to build a strong and secure domestic energy industry that is compatible with our climate goals.”

Amendment S.3270, sponsored by Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), calls for the creation of a “net-negative carbon dioxide emissions project” under the Coal Technology Program. This project would employ the co-conversion of coal and biomass fuels coupled with carbon capture and storage or utilization to produce net-removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Postdoctoral research scientist at the Carnegie Institution for Science, Daniel L. Sanchez, commented on the amendment’s role in fostering technology innovation and commercialization: “Near-term, large-scale, thermochemical co-conversion projects with carbon capture and storage can demonstrate technical feasibility and reduce investment risks, ultimately enabling gigaton-scale CO2 removal.”

Amendment, S.3017, sponsored by Senators John Barrasso (R-WY) and Brian Schatz (D-HI), creates a prize managed by the Secretary of Energy to encourage the development of direct air capture systems by including “a financial award for the separation of carbon dioxide from dilute sources”. “Direct air capture is a vital technology for preventing climate change and ensuring that any emission can be canceled. A technology prize, like the one proposed in the Senate bipartisan energy bill, will aid these technologies in reaching cost and scale,” said Klaus Lackner of the Arizona State University Center for Negative Carbon Emissions on the amendment.

Dr. Daniel Kammen, professor at UC Berkeley and director of the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory, as well as Science Envoy for the U. S. State Department spoke on both amendments, saying, “Natural ecosystems are the best means to sequester carbon, so investments in healthy forests, oceans, and sustainable agriculture should be at the top of the carbon-negative agenda. Moving forward the Senate bill incentivizes governments and firms who must commit to research, development and demonstration of ecologically sound carbon removal technologies."

About The Center for Carbon Removal: The Center for Carbon Removal is a non-profit initiative of the Berkeley Energy & Climate Institute (BECI). We are dedicated to curtailing climate change by accelerating the development of scalable, sustainable, economically-viable carbon removal solutions. To accomplish this mission, we lead industry and policy collaborations to unlock the potential of carbon removal solutions by conducting research and analysis, convening events, and curating an online hub for information and discussion about carbon
removal. Visit our website at www.centerforcarbonremoval.org and engage with us on Twitter (@CarbonRemoval) and Facebook (The Center for Carbon Removal), and with Professor Kammen on Twitter at @dan_kammen and at http://rael.berkeley.edu