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Defending Farmers Against the Agenda 2030 Land Steal

A brother that is helped by his brother, is like a strong city: and judgments are like the bars of cities. — Proverbs 18:19

“The John Birch Society is so far on the right that it often is shunned by other conservative groups,” reported local news outlet NWestIowa.com about a JBS-sponsored speech in Sheldon, Iowa, last summer.

Yet despite its far-right-fringe, tin-foil-hat depiction, the article admits that the event drew a crowd of 100. In fact, it was part of a well-received multi-county tour in defense of private property rights against government-subsidized carbon-capture pipelines that promise to destroy valuable farmland throughout America’s corn belt.

The speaker, Tom DeWeese, president of the American Policy Center, is a member of the National Council of The John Birch Society (JBS), an educational organization built on local grassroots activism with the goal of restoring America’s constitutional freedoms. He described his tour as “barnstorming” to “rally the citizens and warn them that their property rights are in jeopardy.”

Your Tax Dollars at Work

The danger comes from several private companies that plan to bury thousands of miles of pipeline designed to transport hazardous liquid carbon dioxide (CO₂) from ethanol plants throughout the Midwest to underground storage near oil and gas fields.

The piped CO₂ emanates from carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technologies, which trap the gas from industrial exhaust, concentrate it into liquid form, and inject it in underground cavities. The supposed goal is to save Mother Earth from man-made eco-catastrophe, but environmentalists despise CCS. They call it a greenwashing scheme since the captured emissions promote enhanced oil recovery, a process that pumps the liquefied CO₂ into depleted oil wells to extract more petroleum.

Nevertheless, Congress is subsidizing this CO₂ harvesting in promotion of President Biden’s net-zero fallacies. Last year’s \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill included around \$12 billion for CCS; \$2.1 billion of that will fund low-interest loans for CO₂ pipeline expansion. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Jennifer Granholm has made CCS an integral part of her agency’s reckless Earthshots Initiative, which even *Time* magazine concedes is a “costly boondoggle.”

It’s a well-earned critique. Chronic problems and missed carbon-capture targets have forced investors to abandon many CCS projects, such as the reputed poster-child ventures at Texas’ Petra Nova coal plant and the Kemper power plant in Mississippi. Naturally, developers pulled out only after receiving hundreds of millions in federal subsidies for their flops.

One of many follies of the money pits still in operation is the fact that they are “net CO₂ additive: CO₂ emissions exceed removals,” according to research published by admitted cheerleaders of greenhouse-gas reduction in the October 2020 issue of *Biophysical Economics and Sustainability*. Even former vice president and eco-radical Al Gore called CCS “nonsense” and “an extremely improbable solution” at the 2018 United Nation’s COP24 Climate Change Conference in Poland.

Pipelines are also extremely unsafe, as evidenced by a 2020 leak in Mississippi. Midwinter flooding



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broke a pipeline and sent a dense cloud of the compressed, industrial CO₂ descending onto the nearby town of Satartia. Many still live with residual lung, stomach, and neurological problems caused by the accident, and authorities say that, had it occurred at night while people were sleeping, most would have died.

But concerns over safety and sanity never stopped a determined bureaucracy. The Department of Transportation already oversees around 5,000 miles of taxpayer-funded CO₂ pipelines that snake their way through the country. Experts estimate that between 30,000 and 65,000 miles must be added to achieve Biden's "Build Back Better" goals.

The Culprits

Private companies riding the backs of taxpayers to claim pipeline largess include Navigator CO₂, a corporation affiliated with Larry Fink's leftist financial behemoth BlackRock. The company's Heartland Greenway System is an intended 1,300-mile network to transport CO₂ from facilities in South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois.

Summit Carbon Solutions is planning the 2,100-mile Midwest Carbon Express to span five states — Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. The company is headed by ag magnate and GOP bankroller Bruce Rastetter, and former Iowa Republican Governor Terry Branstad serves as senior policy advisor. Summit's general counsel is attorney Jess Vilsack, son of former Iowa Democratic Governor Tom Vilsack, who currently serves as Biden's agriculture secretary.

Wolf Carbon Solutions plans a more modest, 280-mile Mt. Simon Hub from Archer Daniels Midland facilities in Iowa to underground storage in Illinois. However, that pipeline will soon grow exponentially, as Wolf plans to sweep north toward Chicago and east into Indiana and the Ohio River valley.

Farmers across these states have been receiving letters from such companies — letters informing (not asking) them about pipeline plans for their private property. Backed by huge investments and bureaucratic edict, the companies threaten to use eminent domain against landowners who refuse voluntary permanent easements.

Mark Lapka is one of many South Dakota farmers in Summit's crosshairs. He told *The New American* that the proposals entail more than simply laying pipe, covering it, and then returning the land to productive use. The 100-foot-wide easements will demolish underground tile irrigation and drainage systems, affecting all properties downstream as well. They will also strip the fragile topsoil of both farms and grazing land for cattle. "You destroy that," he said, "you never get it back. And it's not just the damage to productivity. You're not allowed to construct or plant anything in the easement area. You are handcuffed with your own private property."



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Carbon-capture boondoggle: The carbon-capture plant in DeKalb, Mississippi, aimed to prove the technology's feasibility, but when expenses more than tripled over original estimates, the project was canceled, sticking ratepayers with more than \$1 billion in costs. (AP Images)

"Eminent domain, as an extraordinary governmental power that condemns your private property for someone else's use, can be used ONLY for 'public convenience and necessity,'" wrote Democratic candidate for Iowa's State Senate Jessica Wiskus in an objection filed with the Iowa Utilities Board in October. She quoted a 2019 Iowa Supreme Court ruling, which found that "trickledown benefits of economic development are not enough to constitute a public use."

However, the mainstream narrative decrees that carbon capture is in everyone's best interest — an essential step to combat the supposed man-made climate crisis and save a planet teetering on the brink of eco-catastrophe. This is the same hackneyed argument that bleeding-heart globalists and their bureaucratic lackeys have been repeating since the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Their solution is "sustainable development," and their action plan for achieving it is now known as Agenda 2030, the modern update to Rio's Agenda 21 document.

Adopted unanimously in 2015 by UN member states, Agenda 2030 contains 17 sustainable development goals that embody a "universal ... supremely ambitious and transformational vision" of "unprecedented scope and significance," according to the document itself.

The goals are intended to be implemented by governments at the local level, but they encompass far more than environmental regulation. Their aim is control over every area of life: economics, education, employment, housing, property, technology, transportation, energy, law enforcement, military, natural resources, industry, agriculture, healthcare, consumption patterns, and social interactions.

Agenda 2030 invokes "all major UN conferences and summits which have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and have helped to shape the new Agenda."

One of those is the 1976 UN Conference on Human Settlements held in Vancouver. Its *Action Plan* states, "Land, because of its unique nature and the crucial role it plays in human settlement, cannot be treated as an ordinary asset, controlled by individuals and subject to the pressures and inefficiencies of the market. Private land ownership ... contributes to social injustice; if unchecked, it may become a major obstacle in the planning and implementation of development schemes.... Public control of land use is therefore indispensable to its protection as an asset and the achievement of the long-term



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objectives of human settlement policies and strategies.”

If that’s not unsettling enough, consider that Goal 11 of Agenda 2030 is to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,” code words for dictatorial control and abolishment of private-property rights. Does that sound outlandish? Remember that the World Economic Forum’s video, “8 Predictions for the World in 2030,” promises that we modern feudal serfs will “own nothing” and “be happy.”

In the Trenches

“Every time you hear the words ‘sustainable’ or ‘carbon footprint,’ someone is pushing for more government power,” DeWeese warned Iowa’s farmers during his tour. It’s a message the JBS has been repeating for years.

“In a certain sense, we can be thankful for this pipeline,” remarked Tammy Kobza, the JBS field coordinator who arranged DeWeese’s speaking tour in her state. She reminded *The New American* that “in years past when we tried to warn people about Agenda 21, they thought we were crazy. Now they see it playing out.”

Laura Janssen is one such Iowa farmer whose eyes have been opened by the pipeline property grab. She joined the JBS after hearing DeWeese. “At first I thought, ‘This guy has to be wrong.’” On the contrary, “not only was he correct, but it was even bigger than he shared with us.”

Janssen said what triggered her involvement was the underhandedness of the pipeline scheme. No one in her area learned of it unless they got a letter from one of the developers, but by then “our leaders had already sold us out. Both Republicans and Democrats — all of their hands are dirty. Even the Farm Bureau is backing” the pipelines. “The people we entrusted to have our best interests at heart are selling out farmers, who are the best caretakers of the land and have made Iowa agriculture great.”

The situation is just as dire in South Dakota, where the state Legislature passed a law allowing any company with an active application from the Public Utilities Commission to survey private property without owner consent. “None of us knew anything about that before this,” Lapka said. “Now, landowners throughout the state are challenging the constitutionality of that law.”

Similarly in Iowa, hazardous-liquid pipeline developers claim that state law lets them survey private property without owners’ permission, provided they give 10 days’ advance notice and hold informational meetings. Janssen says the companies have held those gatherings in the middle of the week during busy harvest season, so it is no surprise that farmers cannot attend.

She was present for two of them and asked Navigator representatives fundamental questions such as whether they honestly think CO₂ is dangerous, or how depleting this vital plant food from the air could possibly promote crop yield. “No answer,” she recalls. “They just sat there with poker faces.”

Ted and Kim Junker, who’ve been farming in Iowa for 30 years, told *The New American* of similar experiences with Navigator’s “informational” sessions. “Some people in the meetings ask them outright, ‘Would you be building [the pipeline] if it weren’t for these federal subsidies?’” Ted recalled, “They give a long answer, but the short answer is ‘no.’”

People such as Janssen and the Junkers are beginning to realize that the pipelines are merely a ruse to implement Agenda 2030’s land grab. From the trenches of the battle they recognize that carbon



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capture has nothing to do with environmental goodwill. "Navigator and Summit cross each other at least 12 times in northwest Iowa and southern Minnesota alone," Ted pointed out, acknowledging that the pipeline network would be constructed more efficiently if its purpose were not gobbling up farmland.

"It'll improve our carbon footprint so the people in California can buy more ethanol?" he asked. Janssen also noted the hypocrisy, pointing out, "Why invest all this money in ethanol plants when we're being pushed toward electric cars?"

Birchers to the Rescue

Landowner opposition to the pipelines is indeed strong, as DeWeese told *The New American*. But he, too, blames political leadership for failure in their duty to defend their own constituents, especially admonishing county boards.

"One county had written to the Iowa Utilities Board, pleading with them not to invoke eminent domain," he recalled. In a public meeting he rebuked those commissioners: "This is how you represent your people? By pleading? Shameful! You are the body directly elected by the people to protect their rights. You must take action to do that!"

DeWeese instructed them about how to enact ordinances that protect property rights from pipeline incursion, and also called on sheriffs to enforce property-rights laws, as is their right and duty.

Farmer and JBS member Linda Schauer reports that this local approach is working in her area of South Dakota. "County commissioners are on the side of the farmers and are starting to realize that they have more power than they originally thought," she told *The New American*.

However, Janssen says she is shocked at how many farmers look the other way when their property does not lie directly in the path of the pipeline. "Don't they realize that they could be next on the chopping block?" she wonders. "Don't they know that this isn't going to stop? This is just round one. If you don't get involved now, what are you waiting for?"

Meanwhile, many landowners directly affected by the pipeline are left to fend for themselves, facing lawsuits for refusing to allow surveys of their farms. Representing dozens of them across the Midwest is Brian Jorde of Domina Law Group in Omaha, Nebraska. He warns against the attitude of those who consider themselves safely out of the line of fire. "It's easy to ignore things that don't directly affect us, but in the meantime, lobbyists and power brokers keep writing new laws and regulations," he told *The New American*. "When it ends up on their doorsteps, landowners wonder how it got this bad." He cautioned that those unwilling to defend rights are at the greatest risk of losing them.

That is exactly why Birchers are stepping up — both to defend farmers against the pipeline and to warn the rest of America about Agenda 2030. "This is a globalist attempt to take over our private property, to destroy wealth and to violate our Constitution," Kobza told *The New American*, "and it is based on the biggest lie in history: man-made climate change."

To counter green propaganda, "The John Birch Society fights on the basis of truth, not lies," avows Kobza. She sees victory through JBS educational efforts. "I think people are waking up to the fact that this is part of a larger scheme. They don't think we're peddling crazy conspiracy theories anymore. They see it playing out."



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