



TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

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Well, At Least the Monitoring is a Success

As the pressure to reduce carbon emissions continues to build, so does the realization that we are not on the path to doing that well enough or soon enough. Thank goodness we have carbon sequestration options to help us along. It sometimes seems that [every mother's son](#) has an idea for how to do that. Some, like planting trees, are relatively straightforward but take time and are subject to their own limitations, such as limited lives and calamitous fires that can liberate a plant of its carbon. Hence the attraction of injecting carbon [deep underground](#) where it can [live forever](#) and ever. Carbon capture and storage is alluring because it has the potential to leverage existing expertise and existing holes in the ground to sequester lots of carbon-dioxide sooner rather than later. After all, [experts tell us](#) liquified carbon-dioxide can be moved by pipelines or rail from places like power plants to injection wells all over the place. It is just a matter of scaling up the technology and infrastructure we already have. Good work, problem-solving job creators!

Despite [assurances that this is all very safe](#), things can go wrong when moving CO₂ around, like what happened in [Mississippi in 2020](#) and [Louisiana in 2024](#). But why talk about this here? It's not "TUCarbonWays," after all. Because things can also go awry at the injection sites, and when that happens the impacts can extend to groundwater—as Archer Daniels Midlands can attest. ADM's Illinois Industrial Carbon Capture and Sequestration Project, the nation's first, was intended to demonstrate just how safe and secure injection sequestration can be. Things did not go according to plan, and [ADM has been cited by the Environmental Protection Agency for violating the Safe Drinking Water Act because injected CO₂ was migrating to places it should not have and could jeopardize drinking water supplies](#). EPA also found that ADM had not monitored the well or followed the emergency response and remediation plans required by its permits. Thankfully, ADM reports that no actual harm to people or drinking water resulted, but it's a reminder that even good ideas have downsides, and those need to be addressed before bad things happen – perhaps by having adequate law and regulations in place that apply not just after the pollution gets out into the environment? On a cheerier note, the Reuters article linked above points out that, according to a trade association, the project showed that the monitoring aspect of the project was working. So, yeah, maybe this is a good start, but maybe communities that fear it have also good reason to do so.

That Ain't Workin', That's the Way You Do It

You get the PFAS out of your drinking water. We confess that for water newsletter writers, [PFAS](#) and other “forever chemicals” that get into our waters, soils, and bodies are convenient go-to topics because there's always something new and bad to write about. So color us surprised and delighted to come across [news from Orange County, California that the town of Yorba Linda has nearly eliminated PFAS from its drinking water](#). Magic? No, filtration. Not just your basic home aquarium filtration but cool polymer bead filtration. Cheap? Not exactly but effective and less costly than finding a new water source or running afoul of new [EPA rules requiring the removal of PFAS](#). At the very least, it is a ray of hope and an example other communities might learn from. As for what they do with the PFAS once it's removed, it's unclear from media coverage. Perhaps one [mustn't ask us](#).

Food from the Central-er Valley?

For more than a century, California, especially its Salinas Valley and [Central Valley](#), has been the source of [romance](#), [adventure](#), and lots of the fruits and vegetables on tables across the country. So much so that [John Steinbeck](#) (a famous American writer from the 1900s for our younger readers) was inspired to write his classic “[East of Eden](#)”, a tale of family trauma and beans. California still attracts its share of romance and adventure, but if the premise of a [project of the World Wildlife Fund is correct, a lot of tomorrow’s fruits and vegetables may be grown east of California](#). The reason? Climate change and water shortages may drive commercial scale produce farming to places with more water, ample land, and a more moderate climate. To wit: the mid-Mississippi River Delta. America’s really central valley, if you will. It’s tempting to dismiss this as climate handwringing or the dreams of Agriculture Commissioners in the lower Mississippi Valley, but as TUWW reported last week, produce farms in Texas are suffering deeply from lack of water and competition over the waters that exist, At the same time, California tries to get a handle on its own groundwater mismanagement, [as difficult as that may be](#). That means that states like Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, states with deep agricultural roots, may soon see a revolution in how farming is done and what is grown. It also means that the time to start planning for the water needs and impacts of such a shift is now.

Coming Up:

[State of the Coast 2025](#)
Proposals Deadline EXTENDED to October 7, 2024

Water jobs:

[Policy Fellow](#); Louisiana Public Service Commission; Southeast LA

[Engagement Manager](#); National Audubon Society; New Orleans, LA

[Community Science and Environmental Education Manager](#);
Pontchartrain Conservancy; New Orleans LA

[Sportsmen Outreach and Policy Specialist](#); National Wildlife Federation;
New Orleans, LA

[Visiting Professor \(Clinical Assistant Professor\)](#); Tulane Environmental
Law Clinic; New Orleans, LA



The [Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy](#) is a program of the Tulane University Law School. The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and legal stewardship of water.

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