

# THE ISSUE: HYDROGEN

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

**SUMMARY:** The Biden administration has committed billions of dollars to developing ways to turn natural gas into hydrogen, a fuel that burns without carbon emissions, and the Shapiro administration has endorsed a regional effort to attract those dollars to the Pittsburgh region.

**THE CANDIDATES: DO YOU SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HYDROGEN HUB IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA USING NATURAL GAS AS THE FEEDSTOCK ALONG WITH CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE TECHNOLOGY?<sup>1</sup>**

**SARA INNAMORATO: NO**

**JOE ROCKEY: YES**

**BACKGROUND:** Hydrogen burns at a high temperature, and its only emission is water vapor. Because of that, it is seen by some as a valuable energy source that can reduce carbon emissions. The Biden administration has set aside more than \$8 billion to be distributed among regions that can build the infrastructure to produce and use carbon-free hydrogen to produce electricity, power vehicles, and replace carbon-based fuels in manufacturing.

A coalition of companies and organizations, led by Team PA, the state's public-private economic development partnership, is competing to attract billions in public and private investment to the Pittsburgh region. The concept is to convert natural gas from the Marcellus Shale region into carbon and hydrogen. The carbon would be captured and piped to massive underground storage fields. The hydrogen would be used in multiple ways, including to decarbonize the industrial processes that make products such as steel and chemicals.

Gov. Shapiro said the hydrogen effort in the Pittsburgh region "has a vision for emissions reduction that prioritizes large-scale deployment of clean hydrogen production and end-users in the tri-state region of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia – a vision that greatly benefits the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and one that I share and strongly support."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://teampa.com/2023/04/team-pa-submits-hydrogen-hub-application-for-decarbonization-network-of-appalachia-dna/>

Creating a hydrogen hub would require building one or more hydrogen production plants outfitted with carbon-capture technology; construction of the carbon storage fields, hundreds of miles of new pipelines to carry the hydrogen to customers and transport the captured carbon to storage fields; and adaptation of existing facilities (or the building of new ones) to use the hydrogen. That would presumably create thousands of construction jobs, though hydrogen proponents competing for the federal dollars here and elsewhere have been vague about how many jobs the investments could generate.



Converting the region’s existing manufacturing base to use hydrogen could help secure those high-value jobs for years to come and potentially attract new ones. Many of the region’s existing manufacturing jobs are under threat as energy and environmental regulations change.

Some groups have opposed the hydrogen proposals here and elsewhere. Critics have said it will allow expansion of the fossil-fuel industry, that carbon-capture and storage technology isn’t up to the task of keeping carbon out of the atmosphere, and that it will be too expensive.

The **Our County. Your Vote. Allegheny’s Future** initiative is designed to call attention to the pressing issues that face the residents of Allegheny County and the next county executive.

**Pittsburgh Works Together** is a business-organized labor-workforce-economic development alliance working to grow jobs and expand the industries that are the foundation of our economy, including energy, manufacturing, and construction, to provide opportunity for all residents.

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