Maersk Tankers Looking at Sea Transport of CO2 as “Solution” for Global Warming

Contributed by Alice Friedemann
16 March 2009

Critical Comment - Editor’s note: Alice Friedemann was in the shipping business for years, and she "gets" peak oil from an ecological perspective -- as Culture Change readers know. Even without her devastating comment, the Financial Times news story reveals much about the industrial agenda for our ailing planet.

The idea that Maersk is "green" has been planted in the reader's mind. But nothing will actually happen with the scheme, since the energy to liquefy and transport the CO2 will be so expensive that only some sort of lobbying resulting in Maersk getting paid with public tax dollars (and perhaps a little money earned from some user of CO2 on the delivery end) could conceivably make this economically viable. Nor is there enough underground storage to put a significant amount of CO2, and it's not known whether it could actually be contained long enough to matter. Any attempts to inject it in ocean sediments may result in increased acidification of the oceans.

The end result of increasing CO2 and methane is another Permian level extinction with a 95% dieoff of all species on land and water, as described in Peter Ward's books "Under a Green Sky", "Out of Thin Air", and his soon to be released "The Medea Hypothesis: Is Life on Earth Ultimately Self-Destructive?"

Public relations stunts with happy talk about CO2 sequestration lull people back into the beer and circus "what me worry?" frame of mind. Meanwhile our species and most others hurtle toward extinction as 7 billion people consume and poison the earth.

– –

Maersk Tankers looking at sea transport of CO2

By Robert Wright in London

March 14, 2009

One of the world's biggest owners of oil and gas tankers has become the first major operator to announce plans to enter the market to transport captured carbon dioxide.

Maersk Tankers, part of Denmark's AP Moller-Maersk, said demand for the service could be vast - around 750m tonnes of carbon dioxide are emitted from
large power plants around the North Sea alone.

That amount would fill around 380 tankers of the kind Maersk envisages using for the new market.

Most previous plans to transport captured carbon dioxide have focused on using pipelines to move it from power stations and other producing sites to
underground reservoirs.

The technique is designed to prevent carbon dioxide emissions entering the atmosphere and worsening global warming.

Maersk announced its plans at an international scientific conference on climate change near its Copenhagen headquarters. The meeting was part of the preparation for the United Nations climate conference in Copenhagen in December.

The market would require new tankers with a mix of the capabilities of Maersk's existing liquefied natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas carriers, Martin Fruergaard, senior vice-president of Maersk Tankers, said. The gas would need to be both refrigerated, as happens on LNG carriers, and kept
under pressure, as is LPG.

"It's a natural move for us," Mr Fruergaard said.

Jeff Chapman, chief executive of the Carbon Capture and Storage Association, an industry body, said it seemed to be a practical idea to move captured carbon dioxide by ship.

"I'm convinced there's a place for it in local delivery," he said.

While movement in ships would itself produce carbon dioxide, that was true of any method for moving the gas, Mr Chapman said.

Maersk said that ships could be more flexible and better for moving small quantities of carbon dioxide than pipelines. They could also be used to take the captured gas to places such as Saudi Arabia, with significant space for storing the gas in old oil reservoirs, but too distant from producing centres to justify a pipeline.

The company has no immediate plans to order ships to enter the market because there remain question marks over the carbon capture technology necessary to provide the gas.

Mr Fruergaard said it would take about two years from ordering to have a vessel built. As a significant North Sea oil producer, Maersk owns large undersea reservoirs that might be suitable for storing the gas.

– –

Original story at Financial Times

This article is published under Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. See the Fair Use Notice for more information.