MISSION FOR AMERICA · CHAPTER 19 · THE PLAN

The National Mission for Planetary Cooldown

November 2026 · Beta v0.1.0

Published by New Consensus · newconsensus.com

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The Problem

Ending fossil fuels, however fast it happens, will not be enough to prevent climate breakdown. The atmosphere already holds more carbon dioxide than at any point in at least 800,000 years. Temperatures in parts of the Middle East and South Asia have exceeded 50 degrees Celsius, heat at which a day of outdoor work can be fatal, staple crops wither in the field, and power grids strain under the surge in demand for the cooling people now need to survive. Coral reefs are dying across the tropics, the oceans are acidifying, and thawing permafrost is releasing methane. Much of this damage is already locked in.

The UN's climate science panel has concluded that holding warming to the limits governments agreed to will require taking existing carbon back out of the atmosphere. The technology to do so exists. Direct air capture machines pull carbon dioxide from ambient air and inject it deep underground for permanent storage. Nature-based methods store carbon in soils and forests. But these approaches do not yet operate at the scale the problem demands.

Carbon dioxide lingers in the atmosphere for centuries, so reaching net zero would stop the problem from growing and leave the carbon already in the air in place. On the world's current path, the planet will overshoot the temperature limits governments agreed to hold, and the warming will not reverse on its own once emissions stop. Bringing temperatures back down means taking carbon out of the air on an industrial scale, on top of cutting emissions. No country has done that yet, and no market will do it on its own.

Carbon removal also carries a moral hazard. A technology that promises to pull carbon back out of the air can easily become an excuse for continued emissions, extending the political life of the fossil fuel industry and standing in for the cuts it is meant to add to. Carbon removal is necessary, but only if it is publicly accountable and paired with binding emissions cuts.

The Mission

The Mission for Planetary Cooldown will build the world's first industrial-scale carbon removal system, the atmospheric monitoring network that makes it accountable, and the nature-based programs that complement it. Carbon removal today is expensive and tiny. The entire world pulls only about ten thousand tons a year out of the air by direct air capture, at a cost of several hundred to more than a thousand dollars a ton. The Mission's job in its first decade is to change that, turning a handful of subsidized pilot plants into an American industry and driving the cost down the way public investment once did for solar panels. By 2039, the United States will be removing CO_2 from the air at a rate well into the millions of tons a year, and will have built the industry, the supply chains, and the cost curve that make removal at the scale of a hundred million tons a year achievable in the decade that follows. The work will create tens of thousands of industrial and scientific jobs, many of them in former fossil fuel regions.

Direct air capture at industrial scale is the anchor. The Mission will build a growing fleet of commercial DAC facilities across the Gulf Coast, the Great Plains, and the Illinois Basin, chosen for their deep underground storage rock, their access to clean power, and an oil and gas workforce whose skills carry directly over to capturing and injecting carbon, enough to make the United States the world leader in the technology and to drive its cost down. Because a DAC plant only removes carbon if the power running it is clean, each facility runs on its own dedicated zero-carbon electricity and connects to geologic storage fields secured through pre-permitting with willing host communities. Some facilities will be built and operated directly by the RFC under a public-benefit mandate, on the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Others will be privately operated but financed by RFC loans and paid by the federal government per ton of verified carbon removed.

Alongside DAC, the Mission will fund a national reforestation program, replanting burned and degraded national forests and the marginal land the Farming mission retires, rebuilding the tree-nursery supply chain and the restoration workforce that make replanting possible, and protecting the forests already standing, for the carbon they draw down and hold, with funding built to survive changes in administration. The Farming and Water missions pay for soil-carbon practices on working farms, and this chapter measures and verifies the carbon stored in both soil and forest.

The Mission will also build a Planetary Dashboard, a constellation of satellites, ocean buoys, stratospheric balloons, and ground-based stations that measures the composition of the atmosphere and the condition of the oceans in real time. Every reading from every sensor will be published free to anyone on Earth. The Dashboard will track the whole atmosphere, confirm that stored carbon stays underground, and give climate scientists more precise measurements than they have ever had.

The removal work will be funded three ways. The RFC will provide 30-year direct loans for direct air capture facilities, which are enormous, slow-to-build plants whose only revenue is the government's payment for removal. Private lenders will not put up that kind of long-term money on their own. The federal government will also pay carbon removal facilities directly for every verified ton of CO_2 they capture and permanently store. The existing federal tax credit for removal, worth $180 a ton, covers only a fifth to a quarter of what removal costs today, and the voluntary market of corporate buyers is thin and unreliable. The government will close that gap by paying for the result directly, as a fee for a service. Facilities will do the work, the government will pay for verified removal, and Congress will adjust the per-ton payment over time as costs fall and the industry scales. Each ton will be paid for once and counted once. Otherwise the same buried ton could be paid for by the government as a cleanup and then sold to a corporation as an offset it uses to cancel its own pollution on paper, so the air gains nothing while two parties each claim the credit. To prevent that, a facility will take either the federal payment or the existing tax credit on any given ton, and every paid ton will be retired in a single public registry, never resold as an offset a company can claim against its own emissions. Finally, the government will pay directly for verified reforestation and land restoration, funded by the same cleanup fee and paid on measured results.

The aerospace firms and sensor makers that build the Planetary Dashboard will be paid only when their systems work as specified.

Solutions

Solution 1: Build the Direct Air Capture Industry

A direct air capture plant looks like rows of large box-like units lined with giant fans. The fans pull ordinary outside air through a chemical filter, a material called a sorbent that grabs CO_2 molecules while letting the rest of the air pass through. Once the filter is saturated, the plant heats it, which releases the trapped CO_2 as a pure, concentrated stream. That stream is compressed until it becomes a dense fluid, a state between gas and liquid that engineers call supercritical, and then piped down into deep rock formations for permanent storage. The technology works, but it is early and expensive. The cost of a net ton removed today runs from roughly $600 to over $1,000, higher than the headline figures vendors quote, partly because the energy running a plant carries its own emissions that have to be subtracted from what the plant captures. The entire world removes only about ten thousand tons a year. America's two flagship projects, the South Texas DAC Hub and Louisiana's Project Cypress, spent 2025 on federal cancellation lists. Their Energy Department awards were restored in 2026, but only a fraction of the promised money has been paid out. The Mission will turn these subsidized pilots into a durable American industry, building the fleet of facilities and driving costs down until removal at national scale becomes affordable.

The government will pay for removed carbon. Every ton of CO_2 a DAC facility captures and permanently stores will earn a per-ton payment set by Congress. The payment is for carbon put permanently underground and kept out of the air. Oil companies have long bought CO_2 to inject into aging wells, where the gas pushes out the last hard-to-reach oil, a practice called enhanced oil recovery. That does bury some carbon, but its purpose is to produce more oil that will be burned. Under this program, using captured CO_2 that way earns nothing, and a facility that sells its CO_2 into oil production will be barred from the program.

The program will be funded on the polluter-pays principle, through a cleanup fee on the fossil fuel industry modeled on the levy that has funded abandoned-mine reclamation for decades. The fee will be charged on fossil fuel production. But the Mission is phasing fossil fuels out, so the money the fee brings in will shrink over the very decades when the cleanup costs the most. This is the same trap the abandoned-mine fund fell into, its revenue drying up as coal mining declined. So the fee will be front-loaded on the legacy emitters while the industry is still large, capitalizing a permanent trust fund that carries the long-tail removal work after production falls, with appropriations backstopping the fund when it runs thin. The industry that put the carbon in the air will pay most of the cost of removing it, and pay it early.

Opponents will recast the fee as a carbon tax that lands on families at the pump. It is a flat, modest charge on each barrel and ton the legacy producers extract, levied at the wellhead and the mine mouth, and the reclamation fee it is modeled on has worked that way for decades without becoming a visible cost of living. Because the Mission is cutting the country's fossil use at the same time, the total American energy bill will fall even as the fee is collected.

Verify every ton at the plant. Because the payment is per ton, each ton has to be measured at the plant. Every facility will meter the CO_2 it captures and injects, and prove the carbon actually came from the air. Carbon pulled from the air carries a faint trace of a natural radioactive form, carbon-14, while carbon from coal, oil, or gas is millions of years old and has none left, so checking for it tells air-captured carbon from smokestack carbon. Each facility will also open its books to independent audit. The Planetary Dashboard will watch the whole atmosphere and catch leaks from storage, but the ton that earns a payment is verified at the plant.

Build the fleet. The RFC will finance a growing fleet of commercial DAC facilities over the decade through 30-year direct loans, with operating revenue from the federal per-ton payment for verified removal. The RFC will set the performance target (tons captured and permanently stored), and operators will compete to meet it at the lowest cost. Where necessary, the RFC will also build and operate DAC facilities under a public-benefit mandate, using contractors for operations and maintenance while retaining public ownership and accountability.

The first plants will be expensive. Every industry the government has chosen to stand up, from semiconductors to solar panels, got cheaper as it scaled, as engineers learned, as suppliers competed, and as each generation improved on the last. Removal will follow the same curve if the demand is steady, which is exactly what the federal per-ton payment provides. Paying for results and letting operators compete on cost will push each new plant to be cheaper than the last. Removed carbon has no natural customer, so the payment will be permanent. The goal of the cost curve is to lower a bill the public will carry for the long term, the way it pays for any lasting public good. The realistic path runs from today's four-figure and high-hundreds costs down toward the mid-hundreds a net ton as the fleet scales through the 2030s, with the low hundreds a target that depends on the learning curve holding. Independent analysis is more cautious still, several credible studies putting mature costs in the mid-hundreds even at large scale, so the Mission will drive costs down as far as they will go without promising a specific floor.

Build the machines in America. A DAC plant is a chemical works whose fans, contactors, pressure vessels, and compressors an American factory can readily build. The one part the country cannot yet make at anything close to the volume a national industry would need is the sorbent, the specialized material that grabs CO_2 from the air and releases it again under heat, and it is the main supply-chain bottleneck. So the RFC will finance the sorbent and equipment factories alongside the capture plants, as part of the same build, and will favor domestic manufacturers so that the industry cleaning the air is also one that employs Americans and does not depend on a rival's factories. The Steel chapter supplies the metal.

Put the jobs where they are needed most. The plants, the wells, and the factories will land first in the Gulf Coast, the Great Plains, and the Illinois Basin, the regions that drilled and refined the last century's fuel. The work is familiar there. Drilling injection wells, running chemical plants, laying pipe, and welding pressure vessels are trades an oil and gas workforce already has, which means a region losing fossil jobs can gain removal jobs without starting over. The RFC will attach prevailing-wage and local-hire standards to its financing, and the Workforce chapter will train the operators, technicians, and monitoring staff the industry needs at community colleges and technical schools in the same communities.

Build DAC its own power. Direct air capture is energy-intensive, and the source of that energy decides whether the plant removes anything at all. Run on today's average grid, the emissions from the power a DAC plant draws cancel most of the carbon it captures, so a plant that looks like it removes a ton nets only about a quarter of one. Run on dedicated clean power, it removes what it captures. At the gigaton scale of the following decades, DAC could demand as much as a quarter of America's primary energy supply, and bolting that kind of load onto the existing grid would set back every other clean electrification goal in the Mission. So the federal government will help every DAC facility build its own dedicated clean power generation on or near the site, whether that is solar, wind, geothermal, or advanced nuclear as it becomes available. RFC loans will cover the power generation alongside the capture plant, treating the two as a single project. Every DAC facility carries its own energy load.

Store the carbon where communities want it. The CO_2 captured by a DAC plant has to be injected deep underground for permanent storage. The storage is layers of porous rock, usually sandstone whose pore spaces are already filled with salty water no one could drink, lying more than a mile down beneath a solid, impermeable cap rock that seals the CO_2 in place. The country has plenty of room. U.S. geologic formations can hold thousands of gigatons of CO_2, centuries of storage at any scale this Mission will reach, and much of the best of it sits under the Gulf Coast and the Great Plains where the plants would go. Where basalt formations lie within reach, as in the Pacific Northwest, the captured CO_2 can be turned to solid stone underground, all but ending the risk that it ever leaks back out. The constraint is drilling the wells and clearing the permits. Storing a hundred million tons a year takes on the order of a hundred injection wells, each cleared through the federal Class VI permitting process, and that process is the bottleneck. The EPA and the six states that run their own programs have issued only a few dozen of those permits, about seventy more applications sat in the EPA's queue at the end of 2025, and a federal review can take about two years.

So the Mission will fund the permitting staff to clear the backlog, help more states run their own Class VI programs the way six already do, and set a rising target for permits issued each year.

But speed will never override consent. Concentrated CO_2 is dangerous if it escapes. A natural release from Lake Nyos in Cameroon suffocated roughly 1,800 people in 1986, and a CO_2 pipeline rupture near Satartia, Mississippi in 2020 sent dozens to the hospital. Geologic storage done right is safe, but the communities asked to host it will decide. Because suitable rock is abundant, the Mission can build where communities say yes.

The RFC will not site a DAC facility or its storage over a community's objection. Consent means a binding decision by the local governments that hold land-use authority, the county or parish and the municipality, and by the tribal governments wherever a project touches tribal land. That decision will run through a pre-permitting program that funds community engagement and independent technical review up front and secures a formal opt-in before any drilling begins, with a share of the jobs, the local tax base, and direct community benefits written into the agreement. Where the answer is no, the project will move to a place that says yes, which means the pace of storage will depend on how many communities choose to host it. The Mission accepts that limit.

And because a ton only counts if it stays down, the payment will carry a permanence obligation. Operators will post financial assurance for long-term stewardship, part of each payment will be held back against verified durability over the monitoring period, and any CO_2 that leaks back out will be clawed back. The Dashboard's monitoring is what makes a reversal visible.

What this delivers: A domestic DAC industry removing well into the millions of tons of CO_2 a year by the end of the decade, built to keep scaling, a demonstrated cost curve bending from the high hundreds and low thousands toward the mid-hundreds a net ton, and geologic storage infrastructure built with community consent and federal accountability.

Solution 2: Scale Nature-Based Carbon Removal

The amount of carbon the world has to pull back down is too large for machines alone, so the Mission will also use the soil beneath working farms and the forests that store carbon as they grow. The UN climate panel's pathways to the Paris limits rely on both engineered and natural removal. Soil carbon is cheap and starts fast but stores a modest amount per acre. Forests store far more but take decades to mature and can burn in a single dry season. Replanting them and keeping them standing is this chapter's work.

Pay for nature-based removal by verified results. Storing carbon in soil through regenerative farming and pulling it down by replanting forests are both proven, low-cost methods. Federal support has been erratic, and the USDA canceled its $3.1 billion climate-smart program overnight.

The soil-carbon side of this work already has a home. The Farming mission pays farmers to keep their soil covered through the winter, plant buffer strips, and hold fertilizer to what a crop can actually use, both by attaching those conditions to the federal support farms already receive and by financing the practices directly through the RFC. The Water mission pays farmers again, through its Agricultural Water Quality Program, to keep fertilizer and runoff out of the rivers. This chapter will measure how much carbon those practices store, and it will pay for reforestation. Each cover crop will be paid for once. The cleanup fee on today's polluters, modeled on the fund that has cleaned up coal country's abandoned mines for decades, will pay to replant forests and restore degraded land for the carbon those trees and soils draw down, much of it on the marginal and freed acreage the Farming mission opens up as it winds down corn ethanol and the worst of factory farming. Every dollar will be paid on measured, lasting results.

Plant the forests back, and restore the land that was cleared. America has room for much more forest than it now has, and the places to put it are well known. The national forests hold a restoration backlog of millions of acres that burned, blew down, or were logged and never fully came back, and the Forest Service has long been able to replant only a fraction of it for lack of money and hands. Beyond the federal land, tens of millions of acres of private and state ground that was cleared, eroded, or worn out of farming would grow forest again if someone paid to establish it, and the Farming mission is opening exactly that kind of land as it retires the acres too marginal to keep cropping. The Mission will fund replanting across all of it, starting with the burned and degraded national forests, then the worn-out farmland the Farming mission retires from crops, the eroded stream banks and drained wetlands that store carbon and clean water at once, and the cleared ground around cities where a canopy also cools

neighborhoods that overheat in summer. Two rules will guide the planting. It will not plant trees on land that grows food, or on healthy grassland and other intact ecosystems that already hold their own carbon. The target is land that was forest before and is not now. And it will favor diverse, native, fire-adapted species over the fast-growing single-species plantations that are the first thing to burn or fall to disease.

Fix the seed-and-seedling bottleneck. The biggest limit on replanting America's forests is the supply of seedlings. The country's tree nurseries were run down over decades, dozens of them closed since the 1990s, and there are nowhere near enough seeds collected or seedlings grown to plant at the scale the backlog demands. Meeting it would mean more than doubling the country's seed collection and seedling production. So the Mission treats the nursery pipeline as infrastructure, the way Solution 1 treats the sorbent supply chain. The RFC and the Forest Service will fund a national expansion of seed collection, seed banking, and nursery capacity, rebuilding public nurseries and backing private and tribal ones, so the seedlings exist before the planting crews arrive. The Farming mission's controlled-environment nurseries, which raise disease-free seed stock and tree seedlings, feed this pipeline directly. The Mission will build that supply first, because every acreage target depends on it.

Put people to work planting and tending the land. Replanting a forest and keeping it alive is work done by hand and over years, and it lands in the same rural places the Mission is already sending removal and clean-energy jobs. The Mission will stand up a standing restoration workforce, trained and paid through the Workforce mission, to collect seed, run the nurseries, plant the seedlings, and tend young forests through the vulnerable early years when most planting failures happen. The work suits the crews who already do wildland firefighting, trail building, and land management, and it gives former resource-industry regions a durable public payroll that does not rise and fall with commodity prices.

Keep the forests standing. A forest is a carbon store only as long as it stands, and a planted acre that burns a decade later releases everything it stored. So the program also funds the thinning, the prescribed burning, and the fuel management that help a forest survive the hotter, drier fire seasons climate change is bringing, and it protects the mature forests already standing, whose big old trees hold more carbon than any newly planted acre will for decades and are far cheaper to keep than to replace. The program will count protecting a standing forest the same as planting a new one. The Planetary Dashboard (Solution 3) watches the forests from orbit and flags losses as they happen, so carbon lost to fire comes off the books.

Pay only for carbon that stays stored. Nature-based carbon can be lost again. A plowed field or a burned forest releases its carbon, and measuring how much is stored underground is difficult. Payments will go only for measured, verified gains, checked by field sampling and satellite and backed by the Planetary Dashboard, and reward carbon that stays down over years. Where the carbon is lost, the credit is lost with it. Voluntary soil-carbon markets have often paid for more carbon than was actually stored, and this rule is meant to prevent that.

What this delivers: A national reforestation and land-restoration program, publicly funded and built to survive political transitions, replanting the burned and degraded national forests and the marginal, retired farmland the Farming mission opens, with the seed-and-nursery supply chain and the restoration workforce that make the acreage targets achievable. Protection for the mature forests already standing and the fire and fuel management that keep planted carbon in the ground. And a verification backbone

anchored in the Planetary Dashboard that confirms the soil and forest carbon paid for through this and the Farming and Water missions is real and stays stored.

Solution 3: Build the Planetary Dashboard

The government will pay DAC facilities for the carbon they capture. For that program to work, someone has to be able to verify every ton. Right now the United States cannot. The atmospheric monitoring network that American climate science depends on is fragmented, aging, and being actively dismantled. For two years running, the White House has asked Congress to cut NOAA and NASA Earth science by billions of dollars and to switch off the two NASA satellites that measure carbon dioxide from orbit. Congress turned back most of the first round, and the House spending bill for fiscal 2027 would still cut NASA Earth science by more than a third.

The Planetary Dashboard is how the country will know what is happening to its atmosphere in real time. It is the backstop that confirms stored carbon stays put and catches any leak, the measurement backbone for ocean removal research, and the upgrade climate science has needed for a decade.

What the Dashboard is. The Dashboard is a network of monitoring infrastructure. A constellation of new low-orbit satellites will continuously measure atmospheric composition, CO_2 and methane concentrations, surface temperature, and ice cover at high resolution. Thousands of new autonomous ocean buoys, deployed across every major ocean basin, will report sea surface temperature, acidity, salinity, and current patterns in real time. A nationwide network of launch sites will release stratospheric weather balloons into the upper atmosphere on a regular schedule, measuring chemistry that cannot be tracked from space or sea level. Hundreds of upgraded ground stations will integrate with the existing NOAA, NASA, and EPA networks to complete the picture at surface level. The RFC will finance all of it through performance-based milestone contracts with aerospace firms and sensor manufacturers. Hardware vendors will be paid when they deliver systems that meet performance specifications, the same model NASA used to cut commercial launch costs by 90 percent.

What the Dashboard proves. Every carbon program eventually faces the question of whether its numbers are true. The Dashboard will measure atmospheric CO_2 and methane closely enough to catch a leak from a storage site and confirm that a claimed reduction actually happened. Because every reading is public, any country's climate claims, America's included, can be checked against what the atmosphere shows. That lets anyone outside the government check the removal payments, the international pledges, and the Mission as a whole.

Open data as a global public good. Every reading from every sensor will be published in real time, free, to anyone on Earth. The United States will build the Dashboard and share it with the world as a public good. Other nations that receive monitoring technology will become co-monitors, with independent capacity to verify atmospheric conditions.

What this delivers: A real-time planetary monitoring system that supports DAC verification, ocean removal research, and climate science broadly. Open data available to every nation on Earth. The

foundation for any credible international carbon accounting system, and the infrastructure that makes the rest of this Mission verifiable.

The frontier the Mission will not bet on

Ocean-based carbon removal, seeding the sea with alkalinity or iron to draw down carbon, is theoretically promising but strictly experimental, hard to measure amid the ocean's natural variability, and carries real ecological risks, from harmful algal blooms to oxygen-starved dead zones. The Mission will fund it only as open, transparent, internationally coordinated research so the science and the public oversight exist if it is ever needed. It is not a priority of the Manhattan Projects, and it will not be deployed unilaterally.

Presidential Leadership

Carbon removal is a technology most Americans have never heard of, and the part of the public that follows climate closely is wary of it, worried that a machine that promises to clean the air is really a license for the fossil fuel industry to keep polluting. The president will answer both, explaining in plain terms what removal is and why cutting emissions alone can no longer undo the damage already done, and tying removal to emissions cuts and to a cleanup fee paid by polluters, so removal never becomes a reason to keep polluting. The president will also say plainly who opposes it. Fossil fuel interests want removal to be an excuse to keep producing. Deficit hawks will fight the cleanup fee.

During the Campaign

Make the case in plain language. The candidate will run on building and leading the carbon removal industry, with the plants and the jobs landing first in the oil and gas regions that powered the last century. The candidate will explain removal without jargon and answer the moral-hazard worry directly. Removal comes on top of the managed end of fossil fuels, and the companies that polluted the air will pay to help clean it.

Long-lead groundwork. Because the industry and the monitoring network take time to stand up, the preparatory work starts in the campaign. Volunteer engineers and operators, aerospace and sensor firms, and officials from the carbon-storage states will begin identifying the first plant and storage sites, the first Dashboard contracts, and the people to run them, so the RFC and the science agencies can move the day the new administration is cleared to act.

The Transition

Name the people. The president-elect will pick NOAA and NASA science leadership ready to reverse the proposed Earth-science cuts and start building the Dashboard, an EPA administrator ready to speed

carbon-storage permitting and back the states that run their own, and an RFC mission-team lead who has built an industrial or energy business.

Line up the builders. The team will negotiate commitments with the direct air capture developers already in the field and with the aerospace and sensor manufacturers who will build the Dashboard, and will confer with governors and the carbon-storage primacy states on where the first plants and wells will go.

Lock the tools with the RFC. With the RFC, the team will set the loan terms, the per-ton payment design and its verification rules, and the pay-for-performance contracts for the Dashboard fleet.

Draft the legislation. Counsel will write the opening package during the transition so it is ready to go to Congress in the first weeks. It will cover the RFC's carbon-removal financing, the per-ton payment and its cleanup fee, the reforestation program, and the Open Data Pledge.

Day One

The president will direct the EPA to accelerate carbon-storage permitting and support the states that permit their own, direct the Energy Department to put Project Cypress and the South Texas Hub on firm footing out of money Congress has already appropriated, and reverse the proposed cuts to NOAA and NASA Earth science while directing them to begin the Dashboard's design. A procurement order will point federal buyers toward verified carbon removal. The president will open the RFC's carbon-removal applications and name the first plants and the first regions to build them, ready to close the moment Congress authorizes the financing line in the opening package.

The First 100 Days

The legislation drafted in the transition will reach Congress, and the president will work the votes in person. The package will authorize the RFC's carbon-removal financing line, create the federal payment for every verified ton removed, paid only for carbon kept permanently underground, with carbon used to produce oil excluded, and the cleanup fee on the fossil fuel industry that pays for it, fund the reforestation program, and write the Open Data Pledge into statute so no future administration can pull the data back. The president will make the case in person against the industry fighting the fee and the deficit hawks fighting the spending, arguing that the industry that put the carbon in the air should pay to take it out. Host communities are not on that list of opponents, because no plant or storage site will be built where the people living there say no.

What the 10-Year Mission Delivers

Foundations by Year 1 (2030)

- RFC direct loan programs stood up and open for DAC facilities, first loan commitments closed

- Federal per-ton payment program for verified carbon removal enacted, with the initial rate set by Congress and verification protocols in place
- Cleanup fee on fossil production enacted and the permanent removal trust fund capitalized
- Anti-stacking and single-registry rules in force, so no ton is paid twice or resold as an offset, and payments barred for CO_2 used in oil recovery
- First wave of commercial DAC sites breaking ground, and Project Cypress and the South Texas DAC Hub coming online after their 2025–26 funding scare, with national DAC capacity on the order of 1–2 million tons a year
- Class VI storage-permitting surge funded, with EPA review staff expanded and the first additional states supported toward their own permitting authority
- First new injection wells permitted and under construction at the flagship storage sites
- Domestic sorbent and DAC-equipment manufacturing lines financed and breaking ground
- Pre-permitting program for saline storage stood up, with the willing-community opt-in process underway on the Gulf Coast, in the Great Plains, and in the Illinois Basin
- First reforestation and land-restoration projects funded on marginal and freed acreage identified with the Farming mission
- Reforestation program enacted, funded by the cleanup fee and paying on measured, verified forest carbon
- National tree-seed collection and nursery capacity expansion funded, and a standing restoration workforce launched with the Workforce mission
- Planetary Dashboard first-generation satellite constellation, ocean buoy network, and stratospheric balloon program under contract, with first instruments in production
- Open Data Pledge enacted, committing the country to publish atmospheric and ocean data as the monitoring fleet comes online
- Carbon removal workforce training launched at community colleges and technical schools, first cohorts enrolled, with prevailing-wage and local-hire standards attached to RFC financing

Scale Up by Year 5 (2034)

- A first cohort of commercial DAC facilities operational, capturing on the order of several million tons of CO_2 per year, each on its own dedicated clean power
- DAC costs falling along the learning curve, with second-generation facilities 30–50 percent cheaper than the first
- Domestic sorbent industry supplying the fleet at scale, with equipment costs falling as manufacturing lines multiply
- Class VI permitting throughput ramped to dozens of permits a year across EPA and the primacy states, with injection wells scaling with the plants
- Geologic storage operating under full monitoring, financial assurance, and clawback rules, with the Dashboard tracking every site for leaks
- The cleanup-fee trust fund carrying the per-ton payments, with the payment rate stepped down as costs fall

- Reforestation and land-restoration program scaling across many states, funded by the cleanup fee and paid on verified outcomes
- Reforestation and wetland restoration underway across millions of acres, with fire and fuel management protecting both planted and standing forests, and the tree-nursery supply chain producing seedlings at scale
- Tens of thousands employed across capture, drilling, manufacturing, and monitoring, concentrated in former fossil fuel regions
- Planetary Dashboard at full initial operating capability, with real-time atmospheric and ocean data published openly worldwide
- Atmospheric monitoring precise enough to verify removals and catch storage leaks independently of the operators
- Soil and forest carbon independently verified through field sampling, satellite, and the Planetary Dashboard, so every nature-based ton paid for is confirmed real
- The United States established as the world's cost and technology leader in engineered carbon removal

The Mission Delivered by Year 10 (2039)

- A built-out commercial DAC industry, the largest and most advanced in the world, with annual removals well into the millions of tons of CO_2, on a path toward a hundred million tons a year in the following decade
- DAC costs at the most mature facilities pushed toward the low hundreds of dollars per net ton, with $100 to $150 a long-run aspiration that leading analysis today judges unlikely
- A mature domestic supply chain for sorbent and DAC equipment, now exporting the technology to the world
- Class VI permitting no longer the bottleneck, with hundreds of injection wells operating under monitored, insured, clawback-backed storage
- Every stored ton verified at the plant and watched from the sky, with reversals caught and clawed back
- The permanent trust fund and its appropriations backstop carrying removal even as fossil production and the fee base decline
- Verified forest-carbon gains across millions of acres of restored and protected forest, and the farmland soil-carbon gains paid for through the Farming and Water missions confirmed real through the Dashboard
- Total U.S. carbon removal, direct air capture plus nature-based, the largest national removal program in the world and still climbing
- Tens of thousands of durable jobs across the removal economy, many in the regions that once produced the country's fossil fuels
- Planetary Dashboard fully operational at final design capacity, and a global open-data standard established and adopted abroad
- Carbon accounting checked against direct measurement, with the U.S. network the backbone of international verification

- The DAC industry established as an instrument of climate diplomacy through the Foreign Policy chapter's open-data and oceans work

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