Carbon Conversion Program
USEA Presentation – 11/09/2023

NATIONAL ENERGY TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY

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National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL)

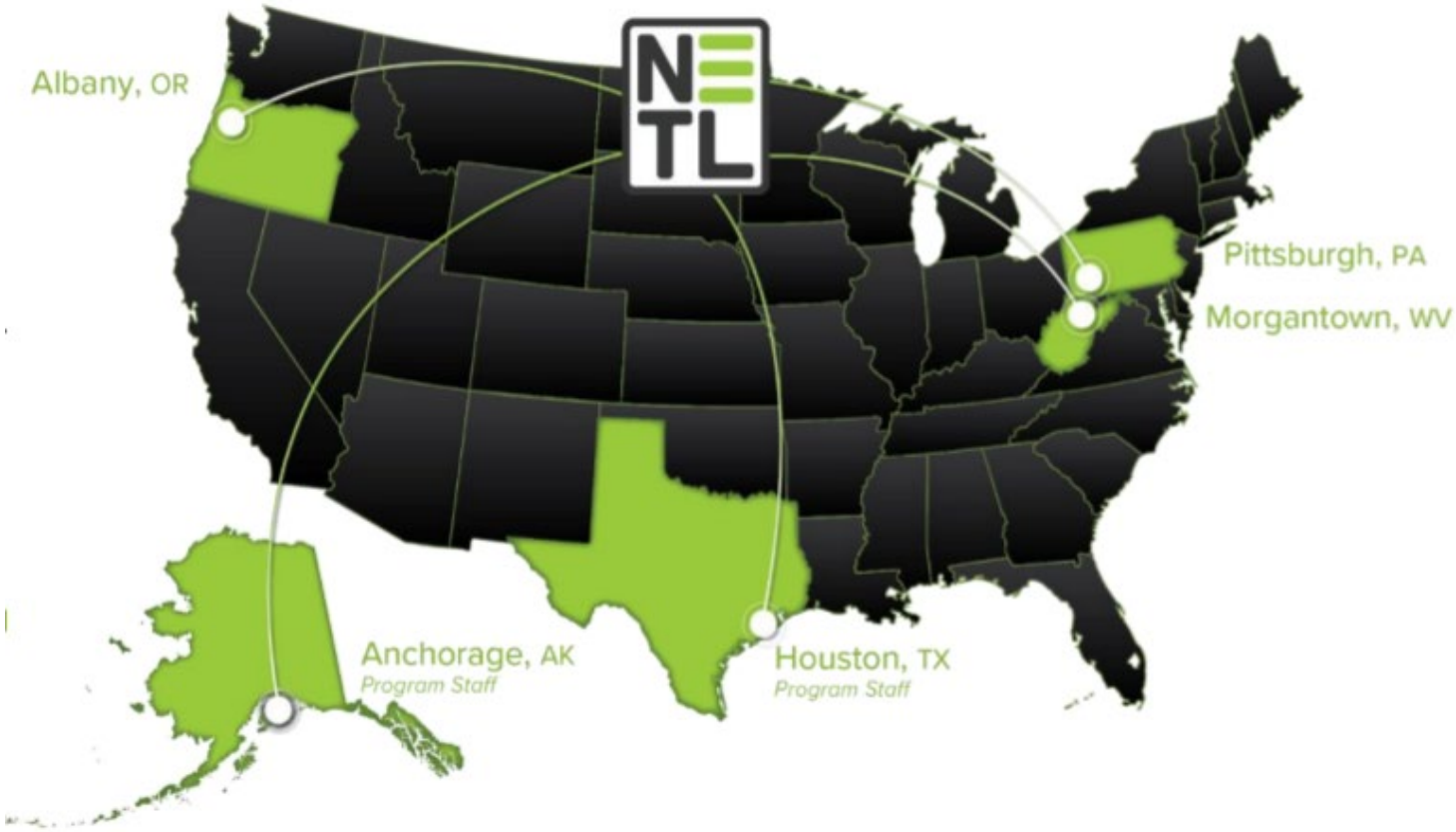
One of 17 U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratories; producing technological solutions to America's energy challenges.

Mission

- Ensuring affordable, abundant and reliable energy that drives a robust economy and national security, while
- Developing technologies to manage carbon across the full life cycle, and
- Enabling environmental sustainability for all Americans.

Vision

- To be the nation's premier energy technology laboratory, delivering integrated solutions to enable transformation to a sustainable energy future.



Strategic Vision and Programmatic Update

Mission

- Demonstrate and ultimately deploy carbon management technologies through multiple carbon conversion approaches
- Mitigate externalities of fossil fuel use in a just and sustainable way, with the goal of achieving 50% reduction in U.S. GHG pollution by 2030 and a carbon-neutral economy by 2050.

Goals

- Support R&D that can convert CO_2 into products
  - Conversion must be environmentally and economically attractive
- Support scaling (demonstration) of technology where appropriate

Drivers

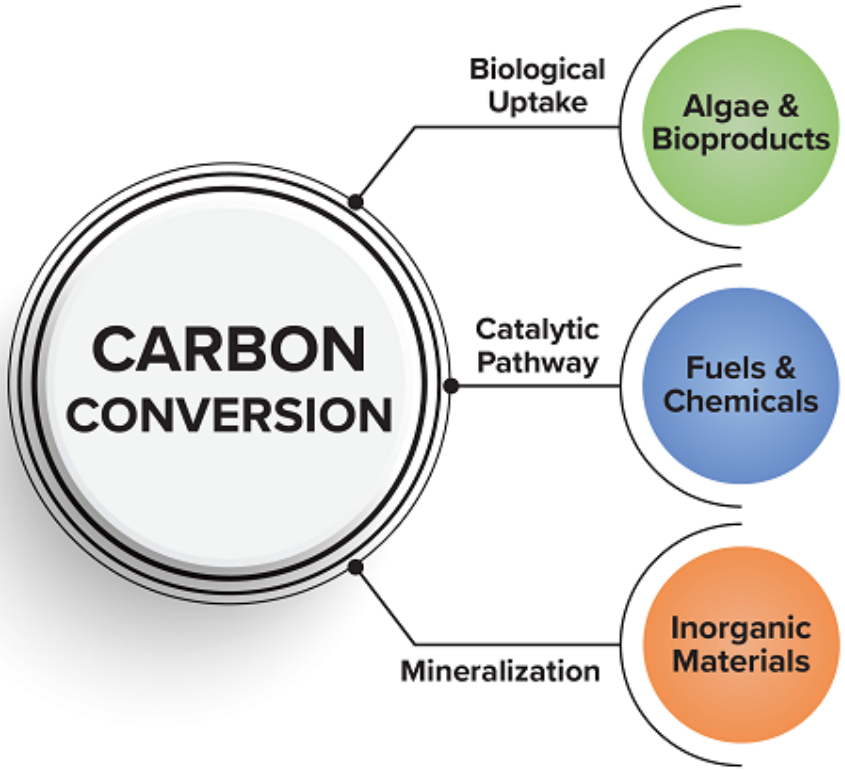
- United States 2022 CO_2 energy related emissions ≈ 5.0 gigatonnes
  - Total global equivalent ≈ 36.8 gigatonnes

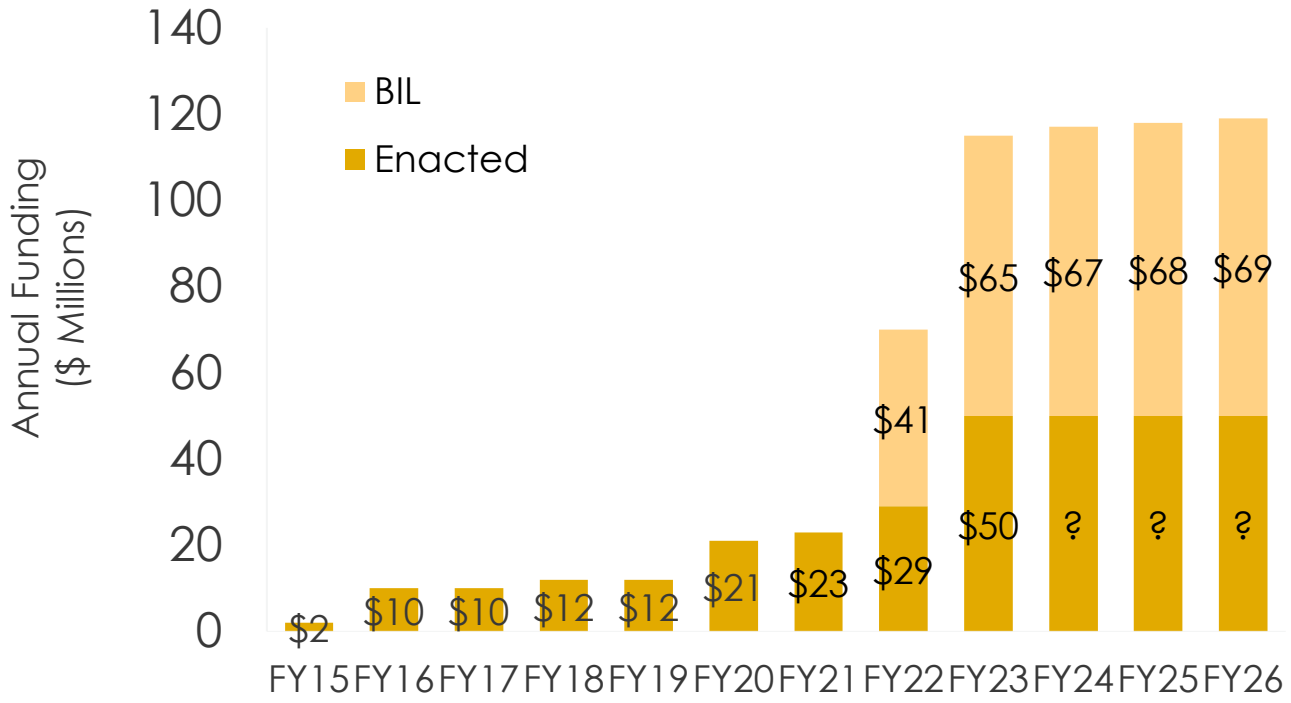
Challenges

- Scale of CO_2 emissions relative to demand
- Qualifying economic viability and environmental impact requires significant resources
- Availability and carbon footprint of energy inputs (e.g. electricity, hydrogen, etc...)
- "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future"

Program Structure and Budget

Carbon Conversion Program R&D Areas





Carbon Conversion Program Within NETL

R&D through Research and Innovation Center

- Majority focus on conversion into chemicals
- Activity in catalyst design, microwave reformation, reactive capture, and more

Life cycle Analysis through Energy Systems Analysis Team

- Vital to determining economic viability and environmental impact
- Active in Global CO_2 initiative
- Challenges
  - Working to harmonize LCA methodology with other groups
  - Requires collaboration across multiple offices, departments, and external entities

Techno-economic analysis through Energy Process Analysis Team

- All successful technologies must add value
- Sensitivity analysis dependent upon many unknowns
- Not as straightforward to qualify as technical viability

Carbon Conversion Through NETL via BIL

BIL represents ~$310MM investment over five years

One aspect is "Utilization Procurement Grants," aka UPGrants

https://netl.doe.gov/upgrants

DE-FOA-0002829

Demonstration Grants

- **50% cost share**

To Eligible Entities

- **States, local gov, public utility/agency**

Procure and use commercial or industrial products

- **Derived from anthropogenic carbon oxides**
- **Less GHG emissions than incumbent**
- **Vendor must pass critical review**

Carbon Conversion Through NETL

Extramural research outside of NETL

Various funding mechanisms employed

- Field Work Proposals with other national laboratories
- Funding Opportunity Announcements
  - Majority of funding is competitively awarded
- Grant Programs
  - SBIR and STTR for small businesses and institutions of higher education
- Other mechanisms including TCF, ACT, EPSCoR

Robust project portfolio

- Thirty-five active projects within the portfolio and growing quickly
  - Mineralization, catalytic pathway, and biological uptake

Carbon Conversion via Biological Uptake

A range of products are possible

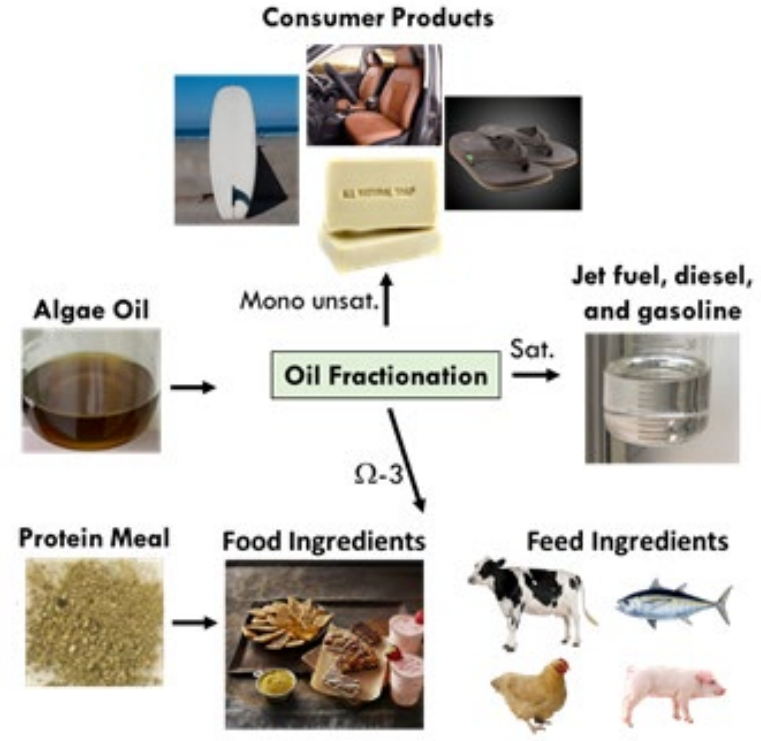
- Animal feeds
- Nutraceuticals
- Dyes/colorants
- Polymers
- Soil amendments
- Fuels
  - Specific to the mission of DOE EERE's BETO (BioEnergy Technologies Office)

Advantages and challenges

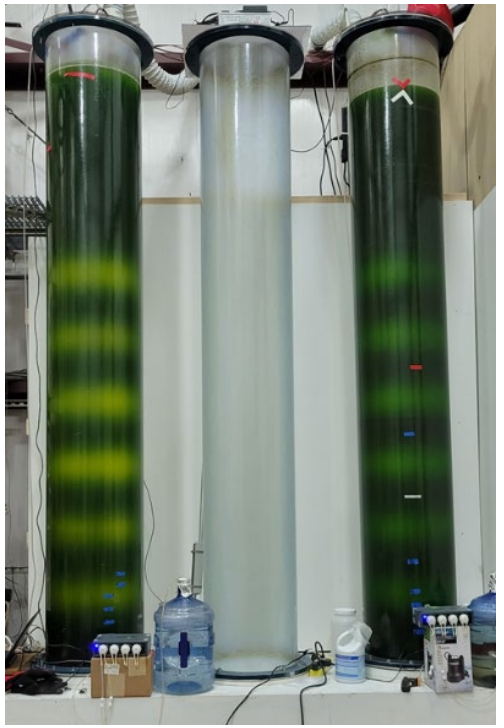
- Uses well understood processes (10,000+ years of human agricultural experience)
- Mostly enabled with catalog engineering (uses COTS equipment)
- Biological processes well suited to creating many complex carbon molecules
- Large areas required to achieve gigatonne scale
  - Kinetically slower than higher temp/pressure processes

Carbon Conversion via Biological Uptake

Pictures courtesy of
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign



Picture courtesy of
Global Algae Innovations



Picture courtesy of
University of Maryland Center
for Environmental Science

Carbon Conversion via Catalytic Pathway

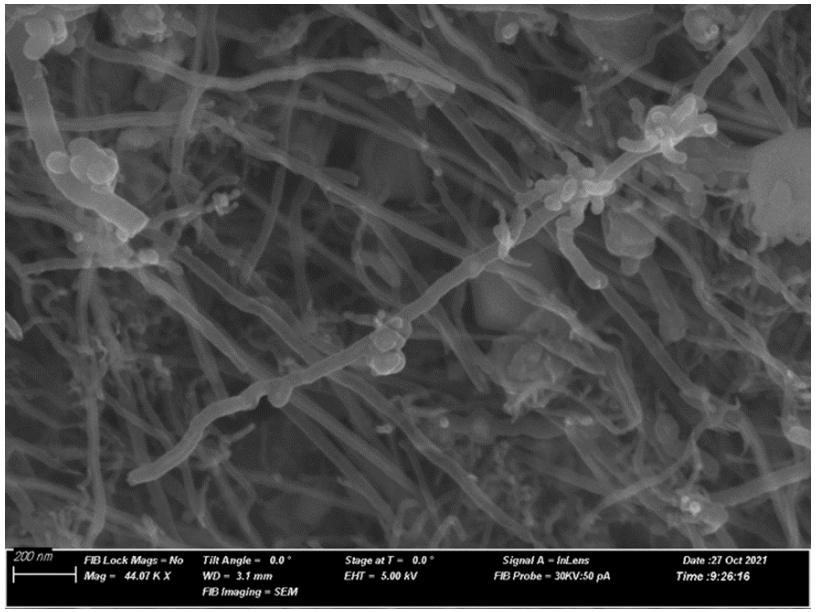
A wide range of products are possible

- Fuels
- Polymers
- Solid carbons
- Alcohols
- C2-C4 products (ethane, propane, butane, etc…)
- Methanol and Methane

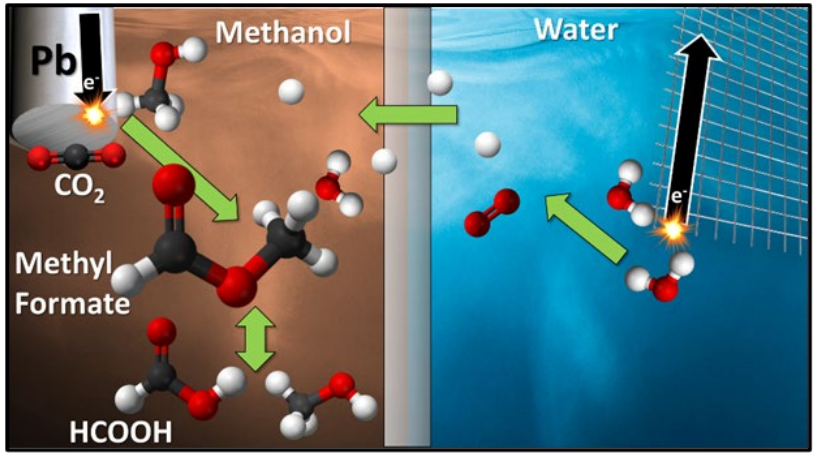
Advantages and challenges

- Pathways to gigatonne scale exist
- Almost any molecule can be synthesized
  - Including those currently derived from fossil fuels
- Value of products must outweigh cost of energy inputs
- Breakthroughs may require significant funding (e.g. electrochemistry and catalysts)

Carbon Conversion via Catalytic Pathway



Picture courtesy of SkyNano



Picture courtesy of University of Louisville

Carbon Conversion via Mineralization

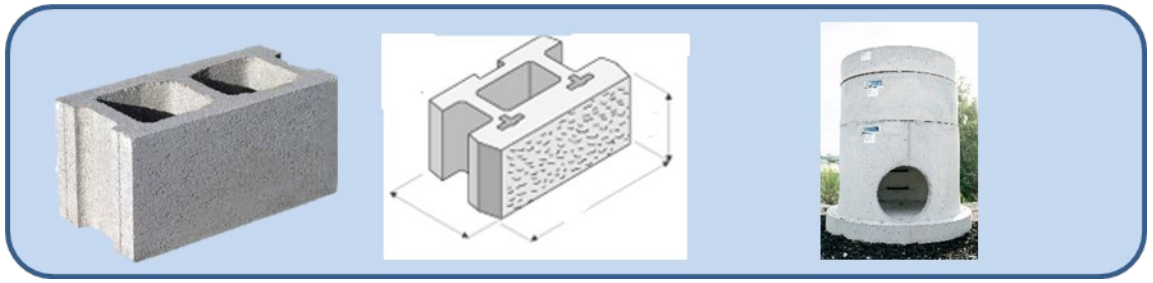
A limited range of products are possible

- Cured concrete blocks (CMUs)
- Synthetic aggregates
- Suboxides
- Other building materials

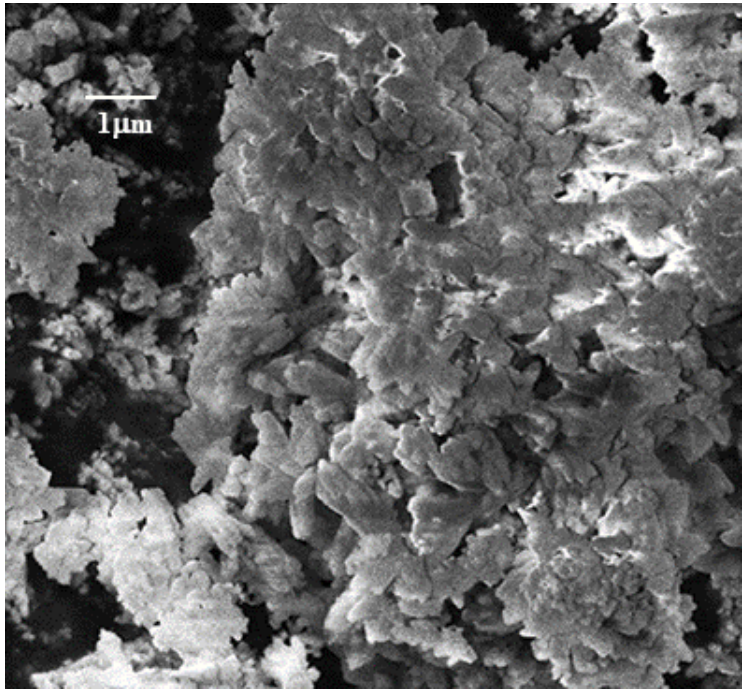
Advantages and challenges

- Can be energetically downhill
- Can apply at gigatonne scale
- Mostly enabled with catalog engineering (uses COTS equipment)
- Can address other waste streams (e.g. produced water or mine tailings)
- Products often have a low specific value (i.e. $/tonne requires large scale)

Carbon Conversion via Mineralization



Pictures courtesy of UCLA



Picture courtesy of University of Wisconsin Madison

Necessity of TEA/LCA for an Uncertain Future

Tomorrow will look a lot like today

- Mix of fossil, renewable, and nuclear resources
  - Abundant waste heat integration opportunities
- Industrial electricity prices of $60 - $80 / MWh

Inexpensive and abundant hydrogen

- $1/kg Hydrogen
  - Thermochemical conversion of CO_2 into chemicals and plastics
  - Industry widely decarbonized (e.g. steel, cement, fertilizer)

Techno-cornucopian worldview

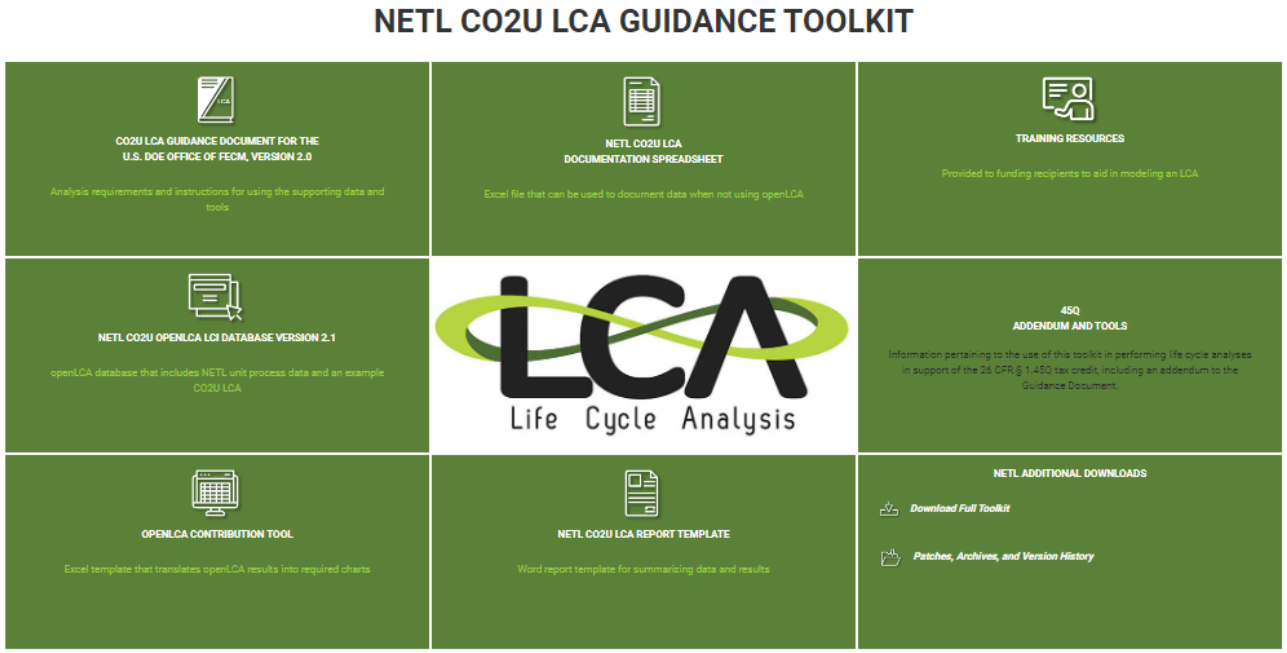
- Inexpensive electricity at $20 - $30 / MWh
- Widescale electrification
- Favorable for electrochemical approaches

Other unknowns

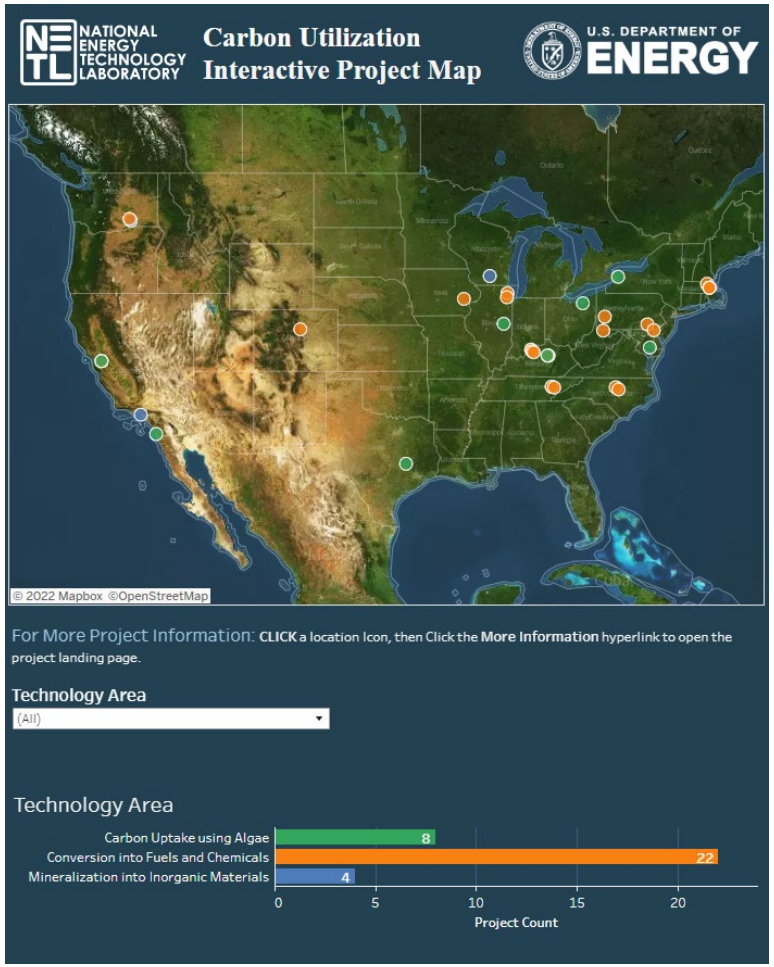
- Carbon prices/credits, DAC costs, energy breakthroughs, R&D costs, etc…

Carbon Conversion Program Tools

https://netl.doe.gov/carbon-management/carbon-conversion



https://www.netl.doe.gov/LCA/CO2U



Carbon Conversion Contacts and Resources

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