U.S. tests CO2 underground storage options

October 12 2006

The U.S. Department of Energy says it is continuing a project designed to determine the feasibility of storing carbon dioxide in brine formations.

The latest stage in the research occurred recently when scientists pumped more than 700 tons of the greenhouse gas a mile underground as part of the department's carbon sequestration program.

The Frio Brine Project is designed to determine how the CO_2 moves through brine- filled, highly porous sandstone that's representative of formations found worldwide.

By monitoring the CO_2 flow with technologically advanced instruments during the next year, the researchers say they hope to determine whether such formations can effectively store CO_2 for long periods of time, significantly reducing the amount of the gas released into the Earth's atmosphere.

"This current project will ... help to advance our injection and monitoring technology to the point where we know what formations can safely and effectively store greenhouse gases in each region of the country to address global climate change," said Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy Jeffrey Jarrett.

The lead project partner, the University of Texas-Austin, injected the CO_2 into a test well near Dayton, Texas, about 40 miles northeast of Houston.