

Dutch approve project to store CO2 underground

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A ferry sails off the port of Rotterdam in May 2009. The Dutch government said Wednesday it had approved the experimental below-ground storage of excess CO2 to curb damaging emissions, dismissing concerns of residents who live on top of the project. Shell plans to capture and store at Barendrecht CO2 emitted from its refinery at the Port of Rotterdam.

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The test project would kick off from 2012 with CO2 stored in a spent natural gas field with a capacity of 0.8 megatonnes underneath the eastern town of Barendrecht, a government statement said.

"After the CO₂ has been stored there for several years, an evaluation will be done," it said.

"Only if no problems have arisen by then will authorisation be given for storage at a second, larger field... with a capacity of nine megatonnes."

Shell plans to capture and store at Barendrecht CO₂ emitted from its refinery at the Port of Rotterdam. The project, the total cost of which was not revealed, will be subsidised by the Dutch state to the tune of 30 million euros.

The municipality of Barendrecht, provincial authorities and inhabitants, concerned about the risk of explosion and earth movement, are opposed to the project and vowed Wednesday to resist it.

"The municipality does not accept the decision," said a statement from Barendrecht, saying it hoped the move would be overturned by [parliament](#), failing which the town would go to court.

"We will not cooperate with the issuing of plans and permits," said the statement, accusing the government of "being blind to the concerns of inhabitants of Barendrecht", thousands of whom live on top of the gas fields.

The government said "the capture and storage of CO₂ is essential as a transitional technology to limit climate damage."

The Netherlands, it said, had a [storage capacity](#) of some 800 megatonnes under land and another 800 megatonnes under sea.

"This will allow us to store 40 megatonnes per year for 40 years, the equivalent of 20 percent of our current annual [CO₂ emissions](#)."

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