

Norway abandons carbon capture and storage plan

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Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg after the television debate during an Election Night event on September 9, 2013 in Oslo, Norway.

Norway said Friday it was abandoning its much-touted plans to capture carbon dioxide and store it underground to prevent emissions from escaping into the atmosphere.

The [pilot project](#), launched in 2007 by Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg

amid much fanfare, has encountered numerous delays and cost overruns.

The plan was to capture and store CO₂ emissions from the Mongstad [oil refinery](#) in western Norway and its adjoining gas plant as of 2014.

Stressing the importance of the project in the fight against global warming, Stoltenberg likened it in importance to a Moon landing.

But his government, currently in its final days in power after losing September 9 legislative elections, has now decided to bury the entire project.

Costs have escalated and the project had been delayed until 2020.

"At both the national and international level, the development of technologies to capture and store CO₂ has taken longer, been more difficult and more costly than expected," Oil and Energy Minister Ola Borten Moe told reporters.

Applying the technology developed for Mongstad at other sites would also have been difficult, he said.

The Norwegian Office of the Auditor General this week criticised the government's inability to keep the cost of carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects in check.

The government has spent 7.4 billion kroner (924 million euros, \$1.25 billion) between 2007 and 2012, including 1.2 billion kroner for Mongstad.

Environmentalists criticised Oslo's decision.

"This government is leaving office covered in shame," the head of

environmental group Bellona Frederic Hauge said.

"This is eight years lost in the fight against climate change," he told TV2 Nyhetskanalen television.

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