

Dear FT Letters Editor

Nathalie Thomas's article [Green groups query push on carbon capture and storage, 11th Jan 2021] about Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) referred to it as having a "history of overpromising and underdelivering". This is sadly true of most technologies simply because complicated stuff takes time to develop. That doesn't mean it won't happen, but it does mean that we can't rely on it to solve time-critical problems.

For example, look at wind power; the first commercial rollouts were in the 1980s, then it took around 30 years for it to become a significant part of our energy mix. There wasn't a particular blocking technology, it just takes time to bring everything together, improve it and scale it up.

Or look at 'straightforward' engineering projects: Thames Tideway (10 years), HS2 (20 years), Crossrail (18 years) or the new aircraft carrier (10 years, and that's without aircraft!). Or fusion reactors, which were hailed as the answer to our energy needs more than 50 years ago but still haven't materialised.

So, absolutely, we should be working to develop CCS, but we mustn't rely on it turning up any time soon to save our planet.

The danger here is that the government is so intent on finding a business opportunity from climate change that it doesn't address the real and present danger of carbon emissions. We can't wait 20 years for CCS; we can't even wait 10 years.

'Good growth', as The 99% Organisation terms it, involves cutting emissions at source rather than kidding ourselves we can sort it out later.

Yours sincerely

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