# North Sea Knitters cycle route of ageing CO₂ pipeline to spotlight environmental risks



A group of dedicated environmental activists known as the North Sea Knitters has taken to cycling along the route of a contentious pipeline in Scotland, aiming to raise awareness about the risks associated with transporting carbon dioxide (CO₂) through ageing infrastructure. Their journey began in Grangemouth and culminated at the St Fergus energy terminal, travelling through various coastal towns and engaging local communities along the way.

Bridget Cooper, one of the Knitters, expressed her unease regarding the plan to use an obsolete pipeline to transport CO₂. "I have always been uncomfortable with the plan to make a new gas-fired power station somehow tick green boxes by attaching the really dodgy and unproven carbon capture to it," she stated. The project aims to transport CO₂ generated at industrial sites across Scotland to be stored deep below the North Sea, yet concerns about the safety and viability of such old infrastructure loom large.

Their activism was notably galvanised by a serious incident in February 2020, when a CO₂ pipeline ruptured in Satartia, Mississippi. This event led to the evacuation of over 300 residents and hospitalised at least 46 individuals due to exposure to the released gas, which caused health complications and public safety concerns. These experiences have amplified fears about the potential hazards of similar projects in the UK, where a significant expansion of carbon capture and storage (CCS) initiatives is currently underway.

Freya Aitchison, an oil and gas activism officer at Friends of the Earth Scotland, commended the Knitters for their grassroots approach. She argued that communities need to be meaningfully consulted about the implications of a new carbon pollution pipeline, highlighting the broader issue of environmental justice. Aitchison remarked, "Carbon capture is a greenwashing excuse that the fossil fuel industry uses to fool politicians into supporting more drilling and burning.” This sentiment echoes a growing unease regarding the role of CCS in prolonging fossil fuel dependency rather than genuinely addressing climate change.

The new gas plant proposed for Peterhead, aiming to produce 910 MW of electricity, has drawn significant criticism from environmentalists. Notably, this facility would be built alongside Scotland’s largest polluter from 2018 to 2020, which emitted over 1.3 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2022 alone. Friends of the Earth Scotland have been vocal in their opposition, with a petition against the plant drawing more than 13,000 signatures.

There are promising ambitions surrounding CCS technologies in the UK, with the government pledging up to £20 billion to support initial projects, aiming to store up to 30 million tonnes of CO₂ annually by 2030. However, the commercial viability of these technologies remains contentious. Critics argue that if not pursued judiciously, CCS could allow continued fossil fuel use under the guise of mitigating climate impacts, thereby complicating the transition to a more sustainable energy landscape.

Historical attempts to establish carbon capture systems in the region have faltered, with previous projects in 2007 and 2016 failing to materialise. The proposed infrastructure, spearheaded by energy giant Equinor, would depend on robust safety measures to mitigate the inherent risks highlighted by the Mississippi incident. A growing chorus of voices, including the North Sea Knitters, calls for transparency and accountability as the industry moves forward.

As the activists complete their five-day journey, their hope is that increased awareness and community engagement can influence policy decisions and lead to a more responsible approach to environmental issues in Scotland. As Cooper reflected on her experience, she stated, “I really loved chatting with people and giving them some basic information as we pedalled along.” Through their efforts, the North Sea Knitters serve not only as advocates for safer practices but also as a reminder that grassroots activism can shape the climate conversation in substantial ways.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://time.com/5789425/pipe-rupture-mississipi/), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/2c2ccaa2-bbbc-4e32-adb8-6939dbd5f78c), [[5]](https://www.npr.org/2023/05/21/1172679786/carbon-capture-carbon-dioxide-pipeline)
4. Paragraph 4: [[2]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[6]](https://earthjustice.org/article/a-leaking-co2-pipeline-can-cause-suffocation-within-a-minute-the-government-needs-to-regulate-them-fast), [[7]](https://www.apnews.com/article/carbon-dioxide-spill-federal-order-b9bf4510e7538dfe9c42a2cd85143441)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/2c2ccaa2-bbbc-4e32-adb8-6939dbd5f78c)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[6]](https://earthjustice.org/article/a-leaking-co2-pipeline-can-cause-suffocation-within-a-minute-the-government-needs-to-regulate-them-fast)
7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.npr.org/2023/05/21/1172679786/carbon-capture-carbon-dioxide-pipeline)
8. Paragraph 8: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/2c2ccaa2-bbbc-4e32-adb8-6939dbd5f78c), [[6]](https://earthjustice.org/article/a-leaking-co2-pipeline-can-cause-suffocation-within-a-minute-the-government-needs-to-regulate-them-fast)
9. Paragraph 9: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.npr.org/2023/05/21/1172679786/carbon-capture-carbon-dioxide-pipeline)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25162112.grannies-cycle-grangemouth-st-fergus-pipeline-protest/?ref=rss> - A group of activists, known as the North Sea Knitters, cycled from Grangemouth to St Fergus to raise awareness about the risks associated with transporting carbon dioxide through an old pipeline. They were inspired by a 2020 incident in Mississippi where a CO₂ pipeline rupture hospitalized 40 people and led to evacuations. The activists aim to inform communities along the pipeline route about potential dangers and advocate for meaningful consultation regarding carbon pollution pipelines.
3. <https://time.com/5789425/pipe-rupture-mississipi/> - In February 2020, a 24-inch gas pipeline ruptured in Yazoo County, Mississippi, releasing carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide. The incident resulted in the evacuation of over 300 residents and the hospitalization of 46 individuals. Residents reported a green gas and a noxious odor. The rupture was believed to be caused by recent weather events leading to ground subsidence, highlighting the potential dangers of CO₂ pipelines.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/2c2ccaa2-bbbc-4e32-adb8-6939dbd5f78c> - The UK is pursuing ambitious carbon capture and storage (CCS) initiatives to meet its net-zero emissions target by 2050. The Padeswood cement plant in Wales aims to capture and bury its CO₂ emissions offshore in Liverpool Bay. The UK government has committed up to £20 billion to support initial projects, hoping to store up to 30 million tonnes of CO₂ annually by 2030. However, the commercial viability and scalability of CCS remain debated, with environmentalists concerned it could prolong fossil fuel use.
5. <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/21/1172679786/carbon-capture-carbon-dioxide-pipeline> - In February 2020, a carbon dioxide pipeline ruptured in Satartia, Mississippi, releasing a large amount of CO₂ into the community. The incident led to the hospitalization of at least 45 people and raised questions about the safety of CO₂ pipelines. The rupture underscored growing concerns about pipeline safety and gaps in federal regulation, especially as the U.S. considers expanding its CO₂ pipeline network to address climate change.
6. <https://earthjustice.org/article/a-leaking-co2-pipeline-can-cause-suffocation-within-a-minute-the-government-needs-to-regulate-them-fast> - In February 2020, a CO₂ pipeline ruptured in Satartia, Mississippi, releasing odorless gas that caused residents to lose consciousness and required hospitalization. The incident highlighted the dangers of CO₂ pipelines, which can cause suffocation within minutes if they leak. The article emphasizes the need for government regulation to protect communities from such hazards, especially as the number of CO₂ pipelines is set to increase with new carbon capture and storage projects.
7. <https://www.apnews.com/article/carbon-dioxide-spill-federal-order-b9bf4510e7538dfe9c42a2cd85143441> - After a CO₂ pipeline ruptured in Satartia, Mississippi, in February 2020, the Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration entered into a federal order with Denbury Gulf Coast Pipelines. The order required the company to meet compliance requirements, such as communicating with all first responders responsible for responding to a pipeline incident. Denbury had already paid a $2.8 million penalty, and the incident led to the evacuation of over 300 residents and the hospitalization of 46 individuals.