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EPA Announces Proposed Order Requiring Archer Daniels Midland Co. to Take Actions to Ensure Safe Operation of its Carbon Sequestration Well in Decatur, Illinois

EPA will accept public comments on the proposed order through October 21

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Today, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is taking action to protect underground sources of drinking water by issuing a proposed enforcement order to Archer Daniels Midland Co. for alleged violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act related to the company's carbon sequestration injection project in Decatur, Illinois. EPA alleges the company violated its Class VI Underground Injection Control permit when injected fluid migrated into an unauthorized zone roughly 5,000 feet deep. The information that EPA has reviewed does not suggest any threat to drinking water in the area.

“The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to ensuring that carbon management projects are designed, built, and operated safely and responsibly, and in a way that reflects the best science and responds to the needs and inputs of local communities,” **said EPA Region 5 Administrator Debra Shore.**

The proposed order will require ADM to take compliance measures at its well, including implementing provisions of the permit’s emergency and remedial response plan. These measures include identification and implementation of remedial actions. The order also requires a comprehensive evaluation of the fluid migration and that the company take the necessary steps to address the alleged violations.

Nearby public water systems draw from the Lake Decatur reservoir or use wells less than 110-feet deep. The fluid movement happened at approximately 5,000 feet below ground level. This means the underground drinking water source is separated from the fluid by almost a vertical mile and that it is protected by layers of rock. Public water systems in the area will continue to monitor and report on contaminants regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act and have been advised to monitor and track secondary water quality criteria, such as taste and odor.

The fluid migration was caused by holes in one of ADM’s monitoring wells. According to the company, the lower portion of the well has been plugged to stop further fluid migration. The movement of fluid into an unauthorized zone is an alleged violation of the EPA’s underground injection regulations and ADM’s operating permit. EPA also alleges that ADM failed to monitor the Class VI injection well in accordance with the permit.

This order is one step EPA is taking to ensure ADM is operating its carbon sequestration well in accordance with regulatory requirements. Safeguarding underground sources of drinking water and protecting human health and the environment continue to be EPA’s highest priority. EPA will continue to monitor the situation to ensure compliance and assess potential impacts.

EPA is requesting comments on the proposed order. All comments on the proposed order must be submitted to the Region 5 Regional Hearing Clerk by October 21 for consideration.

Additional information is available on EPA’s website [🔗](#).

Background

The geologic sequestration of carbon dioxide in UIC Class VI wells is used in carbon capture and storage to prevent CO₂ emissions from industrial sources from reaching the atmosphere. The CO₂ is injected through specially constructed wells that extend into deep rock formations. These formations must be tested and selected based on geologic characteristics suitable for the safe containment of CO₂ for long-term storage.

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA issues permits with requirements that help protect public health by ensuring that injection wells do not contaminate underground sources of drinking water.

Last updated on September 20, 2024