



The water footprint of carbon capture and storage technologies

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ABSTRACT

Carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) is an important technology to reduce fossil CO₂ emissions and remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. Scenarios for CCS deployment consistent with global climate goals involve gigatonne-scale deployment of CCS within the next several decades. CCS technologies typically involve large water consumption during their energy-intensive capture process. Despite potential concerns, the water footprint of large-scale CCS adoption consistent with stringent climate change mitigation has not yet been explored. This study presents the water footprints (m³ water per tonne CO₂ captured) of four prominent CCS technologies: Post-combustion CCS, Pre-combustion CCS, Direct Air CCS, and Bioenergy with CCS. Depending on technology, the water footprint of CCS ranges from 0.74 to 575 m³ H₂O/tonne CO₂. Bioenergy with CCS is the technology that has the highest water footprint per tonne CO₂ captured, largely due to the high water requirements associated with transpiration. The widespread deployment of CCS to meet the 1.5 °C climate target would almost double anthropogenic water footprint. Consequently, this would likely exacerbate and create green and blue water scarcity conditions in many regions worldwide. Climate mitigation scenarios with a diversified portfolio of CCS technologies have lower impacts on water resources than scenarios relying mainly on one of them. The water footprint assessment of CCS is a crucial factor in evaluating these technologies. Water-scarce regions should prioritize water-efficient CCS technologies in their mitigation goals. In conclusion, the most water-efficient way to stabilize the Earth's climate is to rapidly decarbonize our energy systems and improve energy efficiency.

1. Introduction

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is an important technology to reduce CO₂ emissions from electricity and industrial sectors, as well as to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. Depending on the origin of CO₂, there are different technologies to realize CCS. Emissions pathway scenarios for carbon capture technologies deployment consistent with global climate goals show that it will be required to remove an additional 640–950 billion tonne of CO₂ from the atmosphere by the end of the century in order to stabilize global temperatures at or below 1.5 °C above preindustrial temperatures [1,2]. By removing CO₂ from the atmosphere and decarbonizing energy and industrial systems, CCS is one of the technologies that can play a key role in meeting climate change targets [3]. Since natural climate solutions are not large or fast enough to mitigate climate [4,5], CCS is receiving an increasing interest not only from the scientific community, but also from the international political community and the corporate world. For example, some major

corporations are pledging to be carbon neutral and committing to sequester their historical CO₂ emissions in the next few decades [6]. As CCS seems ever more necessary [7], technology developers and policy-makers should ensure these approaches reliably sequester CO₂ emissions and minimize unnecessary environmental impacts [8].

The twin challenges of managing climate change and water scarcity cannot be considered independently. For example, recent low carbon energy policies have had the unintended consequence of exacerbating tensions between food and energy systems with increased water requirements for biofuels production [9], hydropower generation [10,11], and afforestation for carbon sequestration [12–15]. Water is also becoming an increasingly important issue for low-carbon electricity generation [16–20]. Therefore, water is starting to be considered a major factor that will constrain humanity's ability to meet future societal needs while also managing climate change mitigation [21,22]. The expected adoption of CCS technologies [23,24] generates the need for more detailed information about their water footprints and how they

Abbreviations: CCS, Carbon Capture and Storage; BECCS, Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage; DACCS, Direct Air Carbon Capture and Storage; CO₂, Carbon Dioxide.

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will interplay in the water-energy-food-climate nexus [25].

CCS systems are energy- and water-intensive technologies that, if adopted, will commit humanity to additional water use, further compelling attention to water scarcity [26]. CCS technologies use water during the cooling process at the power-plant level [27] and require additional water as an integral part to the carbon capture processes [28]. For example, it has been estimated that retrofitting a coal-fired power plant with post-combustion CCS would increase the power-plant water intensity by 55%, while decreasing the net plant efficiency by 45% [29]. Notably, bioenergy with CCS requires water during the carbon capture process at the power-plant level, but also additional water during biomass cultivation via evapotranspiration. Previous studies have assessed the water footprint of direct air CCS [30], bioenergy with CCS [8,31], and post-combustion CCS [26,28,29,32]. We, here, provide more comprehensive and detailed estimates of water footprints (Box 1) from a broad portfolio of carbon capture technologies, considering direct air CCS and bioenergy with CCS in addition to pre-combustion- and post-combustion- CCS technologies.

A successful solution towards mitigating climate change will curtail CO₂ emissions and minimize use of freshwater resources, especially in water-scarce regions. Despite the mounting concerns about global water scarcity, the water requirements of CCS technologies are often overlooked. As we continue to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of different climate change mitigation technologies, the assessment of the water footprints of different CCS technologies can provide relevant insights to inform policy makers about the implication of alternative scenarios.

This study gives a comprehensive overview of the water footprint (m³ of fresh water per tonne CO₂ captured) of the four most prominent CCS technologies: (1) post-combustion CCS; (2) pre-combustion CCS; (3) Direct Air Capture Capture and Storage (DACCS); (4) Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Sequestration (BECCS) (Box 2). Using future CCS adoption scenarios consistent with 1.5 and 2 °C climate targets [33], we estimate projected global water consumption associate with carbon dioxide removal by CCS throughout the 21st century.

2. Methods

The production of food, fiber, feed, and energy depends on the uptake and consumption of soil moisture (or green water) supplied by rainfall and freshwater from surface water bodies and aquifers (or blue water) (Box 1). Here, we assess the total water consumption from CCS. While pre-combustion CCS, post-combustion CCS, and DACCS use solely blue water in their processes, BECCS uses green water to produce biomass feedstock and then blue water in the capture and sequestration of carbon dioxide at the power plant. In the following section, we describe how we calculated the water footprint of four CCS processes.

Box 1 Concepts and definitions about water systems.

WATER CONSUMPTION is the volume of net water extracted. This water is evapotranspired and becomes unavailable for short-term reuse within the same watershed.

WATER WITHDRAWAL is the gross volume of water abstracted from a water body. This water is partly consumed and partly returned to the source or other water bodies, where it is available for future uses.

WATER FOOTPRINT is the volume of fresh water consumed to produce goods or services during their life cycle [34,35]. Based on the source of the water, the water footprint can be divided in green and blue water footprint.

GREEN WATER Root-zone soil moisture that is available for uptake by plants. Biomass plantations use green water during the photosynthesis process.

BLUE WATER Freshwater in surface and groundwater bodies available for human use. All CCS technologies use blue water during the CO₂ capture process at the power-plant level.

GREEN WATER FOOTPRINT refers to water from the unsaturated root zone of the soil profile that is used by plants and soil microorganisms. It is relevant for the assessment of the water footprint of BECCS because of the evapotranspiration of water by biomass feedstock.

BLUE WATER FOOTPRINT refers to water from surface and groundwater bodies, it is relevant for the assessment of the water footprint of DACCS, and pre- and post-combustion CCS because of the evaporation of water at the power plant level during the capture and sequestration process.

2.1. Calculation of the water footprint of post-combustion and pre-combustion CCS

We assessed blue water footprints of post-combustion- and pre-combustion- CCS using the Baseline Power Plant configuration of the Integrated Environmental Control Model (IECM Version 11.2) developed by Carnegie Mellon University for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory (USDOE/NETL) [43]. The IECM Model is a well-documented publicly available engineering model that provides systematic estimates of water uses of coal fired- and natural gas fired-power plants with or without CCS systems. CCS processes are energy-intensive technologies [44] that would impose additional energy demands on existing power plants and thus require additional water for cooling processes. Water footprints vary depending on atmospheric temperature, relative humidity, cooling technology, and power plant capacity [26]. We run the IECM Model generating an ensemble of water footprints considering a range of atmospheric temperatures (from 0 °C to 30 °C), relative humidity (from 25% to 75%), power plant capacities (from 100 MW to 2500 MW), and cooling technologies (wet-cooling, air-cooling, once-through, and hybrid cooling). We also run the IECM model considering four post-combustion CCS processes (amine absorption, pressure swing adsorption, pressure swing adsorption, and membrane separation) and two pre-combustion CCS processes (oxy-combustion and integrated gasification combined cycle) (Box 2).

2.2. Calculation of the water footprint of DACCS

Water loss in DACCS processes come from the sorbent-air contacting process [24]. The blue water footprint of DACCS varies in function of temperature, relative humidity, and sorbent molarity [30]. The water footprint was assessed using the definitions and assumptions of Socolow et al., 2011 [45] (Page 40) and considering a range of temperatures (from 0 °C to 30 °C), relative humidity (from 25% to 75%), and two sorbent molarities (5 M and 10 M).

2.3. Calculation of the water footprint of BECCS

The water footprint of BECCS was assessed considering the water required to produce the biomass feedstock (or green water) and the water use in the carbon dioxide capture process (or blue water). To estimate the water required to produce biomass feedstock, we compiled an inventory of water use efficiencies (gH₂O per gCO₂) of different dedicated feedstock from existing studies (Table 1; Supplementary Table). Water use efficiency is a measure of the amount of water required by a biomass feedstock to sequester a certain amount of carbon dioxide [46, 47]. Water use efficiency is dependent on climate, phenology, latitude,

Box 2 Concepts and definitions about carbon capture and storage technologies.

CARBON CAPTURE

AND STORAGE (CCS) is the process of trapping carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by anthropogenic activities and storing it in such a way that it is unable to affect the atmosphere [41, 42]. CCS is a critical technology for climate change mitigation, but most of these technologies are commercially immature [3]. CCS technologies typically involve large water consumption during their energy-intensive capture process.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION EFFICIENCY is the fraction of carbon in the biomass feedstock that is captured and sequestered through a CCS supply chain (Fig. 1)

TECHNOLOGY

DIRECT AIR CAPTURE AND STORAGE (DACCS) capture and permanent sequestration of CO₂ directly from the atmosphere [30,36]. Proposed processes entail using solid or liquid sorbents to capture CO₂. DACCS uses blue water during the energy-intensive capture process.

BIOENERGY WITH CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE (BECCS) capture and permanent sequestration of biogenic CO₂ during energy conversion from biomass [39], including post-combustion and pre-combustion technologies. BECCS uses blue water during the energy-intensive capture process, and green water during biomass feedstock cultivation.

POST-COMBUSTION CARBON CAPTURE

AND STORAGE capture and permanent sequestration of CO₂ after the combustion process has taken place [41,42]. This process uses blue water during the energy-intensive capture process.

PRE-COMBUSTION CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE there are two different processes: *Integrated gasification combined cycle* is a process that converts coal and biomass into syngas, capturing and sequestering CO₂ before the combustion process has taken place. *Oxycombustion* is the process of burning coal and biomass in pure oxygen, capturing and sequestering a pure stream of CO₂ after the combustion process has taken place [41,42]. These processes use blue water during the energy-intensive capture process.

TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVEL [ref. 24] (from 1 to 9; low to high maturity level)

8. Small-scale of direct air capture technologies have found niche markets for greenhouses and synthetic fuels [37].

7. Large-scale solid sorbent technologies have been built at demonstration-scale in Squamish, BC, Canada. Only one DACCS project exists, in Iceland [38].

9. CCS from corn ethanol production has been practiced at commercial scale, both for enhanced oil recovery, and permanent geologic storage [39].

6-7. Several plants are under development to produce transportation fuels from lignocellulosic biomass in or near California, United States [40].

8. Post-combustion capture and sequestration is practiced at commercial scale at Boundary Dam Power Station in Saskatchewan, Canada. It is not yet in widespread commercial use.

7. Electricity generation via integrated gasification combined cycle with CCS was attempted, but ultimately abandoned, at the Kemper County energy facility in Mississippi, United States.

available water [48–51]. Blue water used to capture CO₂ in the combustion process of biomass was assessed using the IECM Model and considering the water footprint of integrated gasification combined cycle.

We consider two technology cases for BECCS: an efficient carbon supply chain, and an inefficient supply chain. Estimates of carbon sequestration efficiency were first estimated by Smith and Torn in 2013 [52] (Fig. 1a). Smith and Torn model an indirectly heated biomass integrated gasification combined cycle-CCS facility with relatively little heat integration [53], and assume very high losses of CO₂ during transport and injection [54]. In total, Smith and Torn estimate that 47% of carbon in the biomass feedstock is captured and sequestered in the integrated gasification combined cycle and CCS process [52].

We expect commercial applications of BECCS for power generation to achieve higher carbon sequestration efficiencies. In our efficient scenario, we model a carbon-efficient integrated gasification combined cycle facility with 90% CO₂ capture [57], and adjust losses during transport and injection to 1.8%. Baling losses were assumed to be 4% [56]. This figure is the low-range estimate of Brandt et al., 2014 [55], a comprehensive review of methane (CH₄) leakage rates. Large-scale CO₂ transportation and injection may incur similar losses to existing CH₄ systems. In total, we estimate a carbon sequestration efficiency of 81%. Both scenarios are shown in Fig. 1.

While the water footprint of pre-combustion CCS, post-combustion CCS, and DACCS is solely from blue water, the water footprint of BECCS is from both green water and blue water. Feedstock biomass growth uses both green water and in many cases blue water supplied by irrigation [31]; blue water is also used in the capture and sequestration process during the integrated gasification combined cycle. Here we assume that feedstock biomass is solely rain-fed and therefore only green water is used in the production of biomass.

2.4. Calculation of projected water consumption

We assessed projected water consumption from CO₂ sequestration in the 21st century multiplying technology-specific CO₂ sequestration from CCS processes (tonne CO₂) times their water footprints (m³ per tonne CO₂). Carbon dioxide removal scenarios were taken from Realmonte et al., 2019 [33] and assessed using two well-established integrated assessment models – WITCH [83] and TIAM-Grantham [84]. With integrated assessment models, it is possible to evaluate the role of different carbon removal technologies in 1.5 and 2 °C mitigation scenarios through a least-cost optimization, under a range of techno-economic assumptions (technology costs, energy requirements, and technical learning and growth rates). These scenarios were obtained imposing a carbon budget over the 2016–2100 period equal to 810 and 220 billion tonne CO₂, consistent with 1.5 °C and 2 °C warming respectively [85]. We chose the study of Realmonte et al., 2019 [33] for its detailed representation of a broad portfolio of carbon capture technologies, considering also DACCS and BECCS in addition to traditional CCS processes. Moreover, the inter-model study design ensures that our results are robust across model uncertainties, as the integrated assessment models adopted have complementary characteristics.

3. Results

3.1. Water footprint of low carbon electricity generation

Water use is becoming an increasingly important issue for low-carbon electricity generation [86]. Given the committed trillion-dollar investments in existing fossil fueled energy and industrial infrastructure [87], post-combustion CCS is the preferred economically viable technology to curtail CO₂ emissions because it can potentially be added to existing energy and industrial infrastructure without having to decommission them [88,89]. Using the IECM model, we estimate that a coal-fired power plant retrofitted with post-combustion CCS has a water

footprint of 1.71 [0.50; 2.33] m³/tonne CO₂ (median [low percentile; upper percentile] across the ensemble) (Fig. 2). Receiving increasing attention is also the opportunity to retrofit natural gas power plants with post-combustion CCS [90]. We estimate that a natural gas combined cycle power plant retrofitted with post-combustion CCS has a water footprint of 2.59 [2.37; 3.16] m³/tonne CO₂.

Fig. 3 shows technology-specific water intensities of different post-combustion CCS technologies. We find that water intensity strongly varies with cooling technology and CCS technology (Fig. 3). Once-through is the cooling technology with the highest water withdrawal intensity, while wet cooling is the technology with highest water consumption intensity. Amine absorption and temperature swing adsorption are the CCS technologies with the highest water intensity. Pressure swing adsorption and membranes systems are the least water intensive CCS technologies.

Pre-combustion CCS is another promising technology to decarbonize energy and industrial systems (Box 2). We considered two pre-combustion CCS processes: Oxy-combustion and integrated gasification combined cycle. We find that oxy-combustion has a similar water footprint to post-combustion CCS, equal to 2.22 [1.93; 2.69] m³/tonne CO₂. But integrated gasification combined cycle has a smaller one, equal to 0.74 [0.65; 0.80] m³/tonne CO₂ (Fig. 2).

3.2. Water footprint of carbon dioxide removal

Preventing global temperature from rising more than 1.5 °C is likely to require the removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere with negative emission technologies such as BECCS and DACCS [91,92]. BECCS is the CCS technology with the highest water footprint. Under a low efficiency configuration (Fig. 1a), BECCS has a water footprint equal to 575 [382; 766] m³/tonne CO₂ captured, while under a high efficiency configuration (Fig. 1b), it has a lower water footprint equal to 333 [221; 444] m³/tonne CO₂ captured (Fig. 3). The water footprint of BECCS is mainly from green water to grow biomass feedstock. Fig. 4 shows the water footprint of BECCS considering different dedicated biomass feedstock. The water footprints show large variations depending on feedstock type and phenology. Producing bioenergy and capturing CO₂ from eucalyptus plantations has the highest water footprint (Fig. 4), while miscanthus and willow are the biomass feedstock with the lowest water footprint. In addition to BECCS, DACCS is emerging as a potentially important process to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere [34]. Despite DACCS is currently more expensive than BECCS, we find that DACCS is the most water-efficient way to remove CO₂ directly from the atmosphere, with a blue water footprint of 4.01 [2.00; 6.83] m³/tonne CO₂.

3.3. Projected water use to meet climate targets

In order to assess the water consumption that would result from the adoption of CCS to meet 1.5 °C and 2 °C climate change targets in the 21st century, we multiplied the projected amount of CO₂ sequestered by different technologies [33] by the water footprint values specific to each CCS process. Under a more conservative 2 °C climate change scenario,

CCS would have a water footprint of 3900–5850 km³ to sequester 15–47 billion tonne CO₂ yr⁻¹ in year 2100 (Fig. 5). We also find that meeting 1.5 °C mitigation targets will require substantially more water than the 2 °C climate scenario, with an estimated 5085–8564 km³ of water necessary to sequester 21–47 billion tonne CO₂ yr⁻¹ in year 2100. The 1.5 °C climate scenario will require more water because more CO₂ will need to be sequestered from the atmosphere along the century to limit warming. In all the scenarios, more than 97% of global water consumption will come from BECCS and therefore would mainly be from green water. Indeed, Fig. 5 shows that the scenarios with multiple adoption of CCS technologies exhibit lower water consumption, while BECCS intensive scenarios require more water than the others do.

While our results show that large volumes of water will be required, future technological development could lower the water footprint of CCS processes. For example, to assess the water footprint of BECCS we considered a carbon conversion efficiency – the amount carbon from the harvested dedicated feedstock can be removed from the carbon cycle and sequestered – equal to 47% [52] (Fig. 1). In case the carbon conversion efficiency of BECCS increased to 81% (Fig. 1), the water footprint of BECCS would decrease from 575 m³/tonne CO₂ to 333 m³/tonne CO₂. This in turn would reduce global CCS water consumption from 5085–8564 km³ to 3000–4900 km³ under a 1.5 °C climate scenario by 2100.

4. Discussion

4.1. Trade-offs between water resources and climate mitigation

Building on previous efforts that assessed the water footprint of anthropogenic activities [9,93], this study quantifies the water footprint of four prominent CCS technologies in the context of stringent climate change mitigation. The need to decarbonize the global economy has led to an increasing interest in CCS as a climate mitigation strategy from a policy-making perspective [8,23,94,95]. At the same time, concerns have been arisen about their sustainability and the impacts on water and land use, energy needs and ecosystems [8]. In particular, the adoption of CCS technologies will likely increase demand for water. We analyze the water footprint of future CCS deployment both for low-carbon energy generation and direct carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere, which both play a large role in stringent climate change mitigation.

We show that the water footprint of CCS varies with technology and that some technologies remove CO₂ in a more water-efficient way than others. While, BECCS has the highest water footprint, DACCS is the most water efficient technology to directly remove CO₂ from the atmosphere (Fig. 2). However, BECCS mostly uses green water while DACCS uses exclusively blue water and therefore may compete with municipal and industrial uses as well as irrigated agriculture. Conversely, green water uses for BECCS compete with agro-ecosystems for the use of land and associated rainwater needed for biomass production. Among the CCS technologies suitable for low carbon electricity production, oxy-combustion is the process with the lowest water footprint. We also illustrate the projected water requirements of the widespread adoption of CCS that is required to meet climate targets, considering a combination of CCS adoption scenarios (Fig. 5) and find that a diversified portfolio of CCS technologies is likely to have lower impacts on water resources than a scenario relying mainly on one technology, such as BECCS. Our results enable a more comprehensive understanding of water uses by the most prominent CCS technologies and can better inform management and policy decisions to identify the most effective use of water resources in meeting climate goals.

4.2. Biomass plantations and water resources

BECCS has the highest water footprint among CCS technologies and it is by far the process that will have greater impacts on global water consumption, accounting for more than 97% of the total water footprint

Table 1
Inventory of previous studies used to collect data of water use efficiencies of biomass feedstock for BECCS. The actual water use efficiencies obtained from these studies are shown in Supplementary Table 1.

BIOMASS FEEDSTOCK	SOURCE
POPLAR	[58–62]
MISCANTHUS	[63–68]
CROP RESIDUES	[66,70,71]
EUCALYPTUS	[72–76]
SWITCHGRASS	[66,68,71,77–79]
WILLOW	[80–82]
PERENNIAL GRASSES	[67–69]

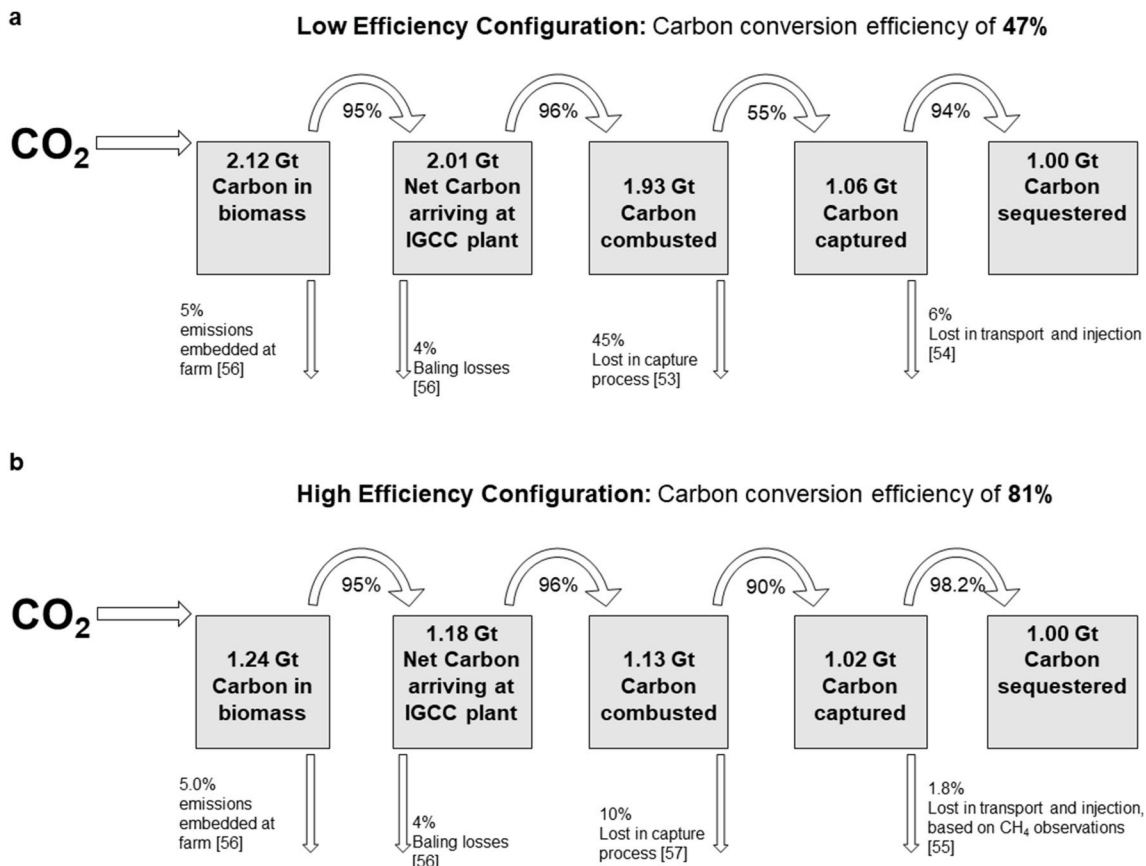


Fig. 1. BECCS carbon supply chain in low and high efficiency configurations. The percentage values are carbon losses from literature.

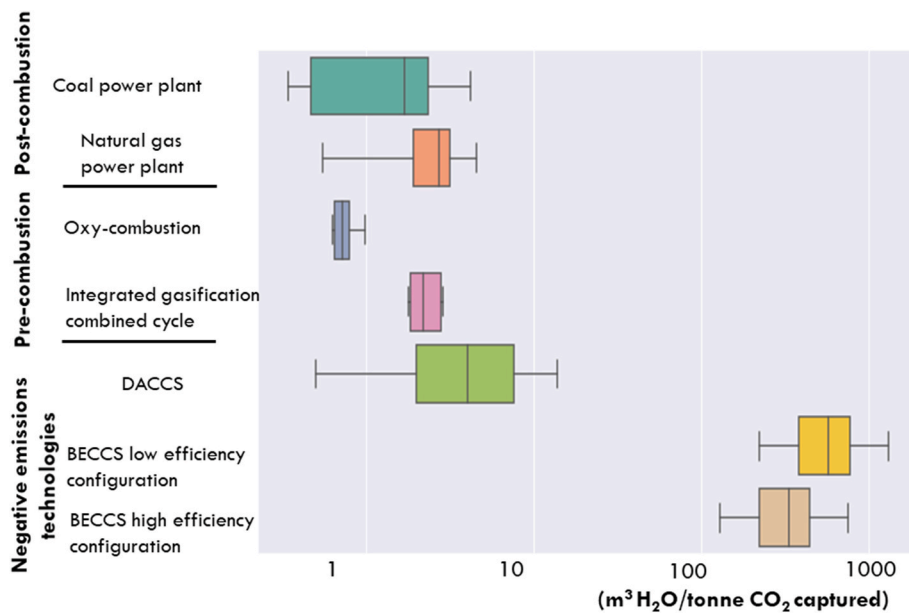


Fig. 2. The water footprint of carbon capture and storage technologies. The boxplots reports a range of water footprints of post-combustion CCS, pre-combustion CCS, and negative emission technologies. The water footprint of BECCS is shown for the low and high efficiency configurations (see Fig. 1). The boxplots represent median, 25th and 75th percentile, and maximum and minimum values of water footprint among the ensemble, outliers are not shown in the figure. Note one cubic meter of water is equal to one tonne of water.

from CCS technologies by 2100 (Fig. 5). Here assume that BECCS feedstock consume solely green water resources. However, under irrigated condition or in the case of phreatophyte vegetation, blue water can also be used by biomass plantation. In fact, cheap blue water from the Columbia River in Oregon has been used to irrigate biomass plantations [96]. Irrigation will likely be deployed to increase yields in biomass plantations [97] and therefore reduce the large land footprint

that would be needed to meet climate targets through BECCS [98]. In addition, feedstock plantations could also have impacts on downstream blue water resources [99] when tree plantations act as phreatophytes and tap blue water from shallow aquifers to sustain their high evapotranspiration rates. For example, eucalyptus trees have shown the ability to take up blue water from the underneath aquifers and deplete blue water availability for downstream users [100–102]. Of great concern is

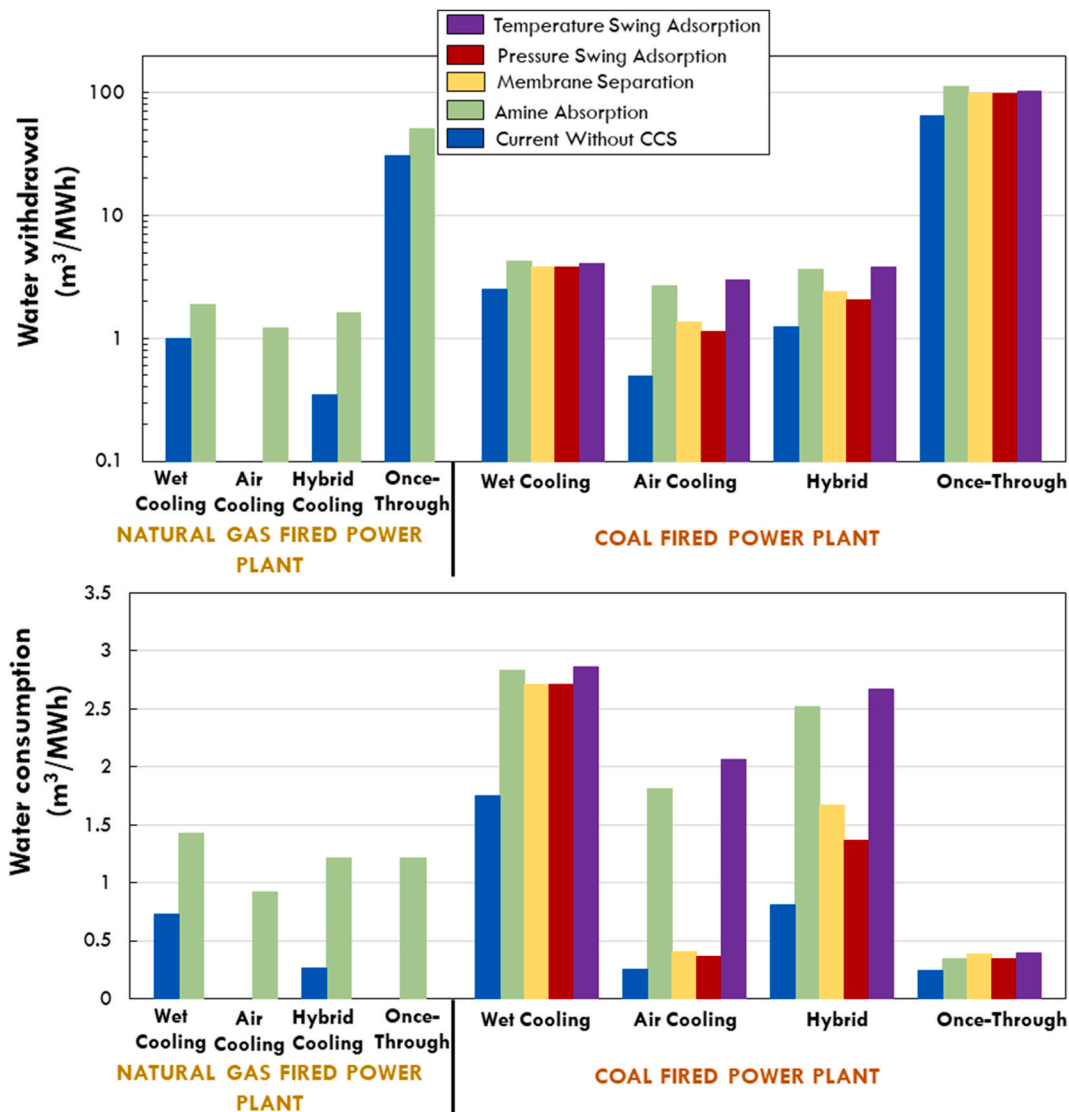


Fig. 3. Water consumption and withdrawal intensities of coal-fired and natural gas-fired plants with and without post-combustion CCS. There are four prominent post-combustion CCS technologies: amine absorption, pressure swing adsorption, pressure swing adsorption, and membrane separation. Despite amine absorption is proven and commercially available, membrane separation and adsorption post-combustion CCS systems are still at lower stages of development [3]. The figure was generated running the Integrated Environmental Control Model (IECM Version 11.2) [43] and considering a different range of air temperatures, relative humidity, and gross power inputs. Note that water withdrawal intensity is shown using a logarithmic scale.

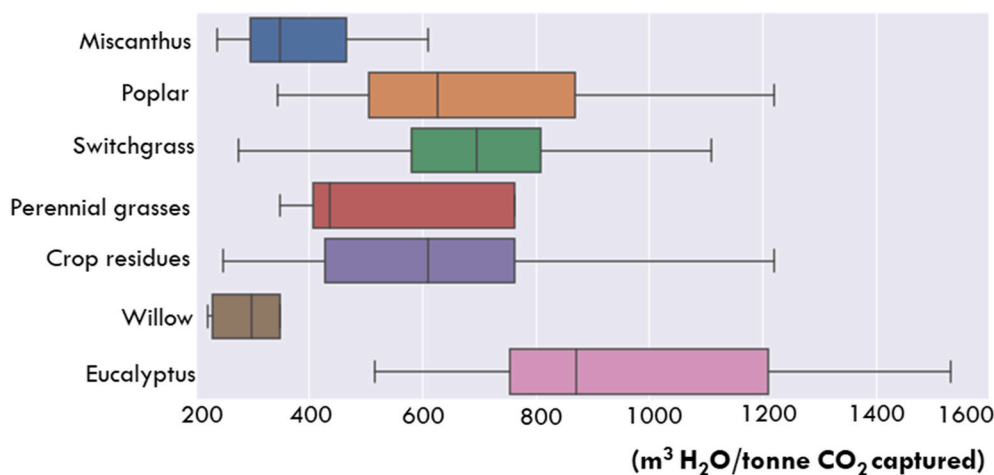


Fig. 4. The water footprint of dedicated BECCS feedstock. The figure was generated considering feedstock-specific water use efficiencies from previous studies (Table 1) and a BECCS carbon conversion efficiency equal to 47% (Fig. 1a). The figure shows green and blue water footprint. Because we do not assume that dedicated feedstock are irrigated, here, blue water for BECCS comes solely from the integrated gasification combined cycle process and it is equal to 0.74 m³/tonne CO₂ (Fig. 2). The boxplots represent median, 25th and 75th percentile, and maximum and minimum values of water footprint among the ensemble of data collected, outliers are not shown in the figure. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the Web version of this article.)

also the planting of large swaths of non-native tree species, many of which perish because their water needs are too great for local climate conditions [12]. Moreover, high CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere [103] and future technological development [104] will likely increase the efficiency and productivity of photosynthesis in crop plants, potentially reducing the water footprint of biomass plantations. C4 plants (corn, sorghum) will have higher water use efficiency than C3 crops [105]. Importantly, biomass plantations are likely to have other environmental liabilities in addition to impacts on water resources, such as nitrogen leakage, soil carbon and phosphorus loss, land use, albedo, and local climate change [8,50,106].

4.3. CCS and water planetary boundary

In some regions of the world, CCS adoption will likely put under additional stress freshwater resources that are already depleted, challenging water systems, rising concerns about water scarcity [107] and the Earth's ability to meet the water needs of humanity with its limited freshwater resources [21]. While, globally, the water footprint of humanity has not surpassed the planetary boundary of freshwater [108], societal water consumption is locally unsustainable in many regions worldwide. In fact, it has been estimated that 50% of blue water consumption [109] and 18% of green water consumption [110] overshoots maximum sustainable level for local green and blue water resources. An increase in water demand due to CCS deployment would draw humanity closer to the planetary boundary for both blue water [111] and green water [110], which are estimated to be 2800 km³ yr⁻¹ and 18,000 km³ yr⁻¹, respectively (Fig. 6). We find that CCS adoption would increase by 84 (±56) km³ yr⁻¹ the current blue water consumption of humanity, which is estimated to be 1700 km³ yr⁻¹ [112]. CCS adoption – through BECCS – would require an additional 6757 (±1803) km³ yr⁻¹ of green

water from the current green water consumption estimated to be 8720 km³ yr⁻¹ [110], or approximately 10% of global total evapotranspiration [113,114]. Therefore, CCS may increase competition for freshwater resources with other human activities such as the agricultural, industrial, and domestic sectors [109,115,116] and generate unsustainable conditions for freshwater ecosystems [117]. Green water appears to be the primary concern, as BECCS plantations will likely draw humanity closer to the planetary boundary for green water and generate widespread green water scarcity.

4.4. CCS and local water scarcity

Water is a local resource and the planetary boundaries for water need to be calculated starting from a local water balance assessment. Differently, carbon budgets are defined on a global scale, as the impact of carbon emissions on climate change does not depend on their specific location, but on the global CO₂ concentrations. In the case of CCS technologies, the exact location where these systems will likely be deployed remains unknown. Our study does not investigate the impacts of CCS technologies on local water availability and water scarcity. We, here, calculate the global amount of water resources that will be claimed by CCS technologies to meet stringent climate targets. Therefore, planning for CCS mitigation strategies for climate change should account for local water availability and the patterns of blue and green water scarcity [107].

We posit that the additional water consumption from CCS could strongly affect the local and global water resources exacerbating and creating widespread green and blue water scarcity conditions worldwide. For example, Rosa et al., 2020 [26] estimated that 23% of global coal plant capacity would face longer periods of blue water scarcity if retrofitted with post-combustion CCS. It is therefore fundamental to

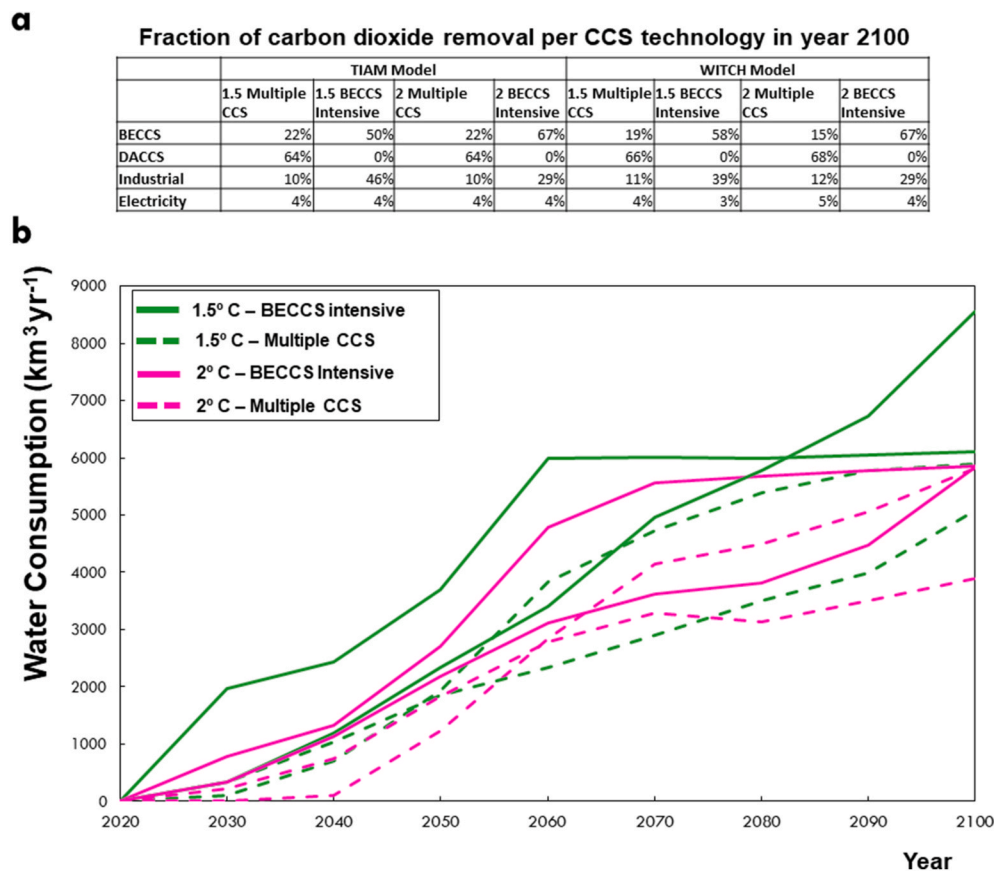


Fig. 5. Global yearly water consumption from CCS in the 21st century in a 1.5°C and 2°C consistent scenarios. The figure shows the water consumption required to achieve climate targets across different mitigation pathways. All pathways require carbon dioxide removal through CCS technologies, but the amount varies across climate scenarios, as do the relative contribution of post-combustion CCS, pre-combustion CCS, BECCS, and DACCS. This has implications for projected water consumption from CCS adoption. Projected carbon dioxide removal scenarios come from TIAM and WITCH integrated assessment models [33]. Panel a shows the share of carbon dioxide removal per technology in year 2100 [33]. Water consumption estimates were generated considering a BECCS carbon conversion efficiency equal to 47% (Fig. 1a).

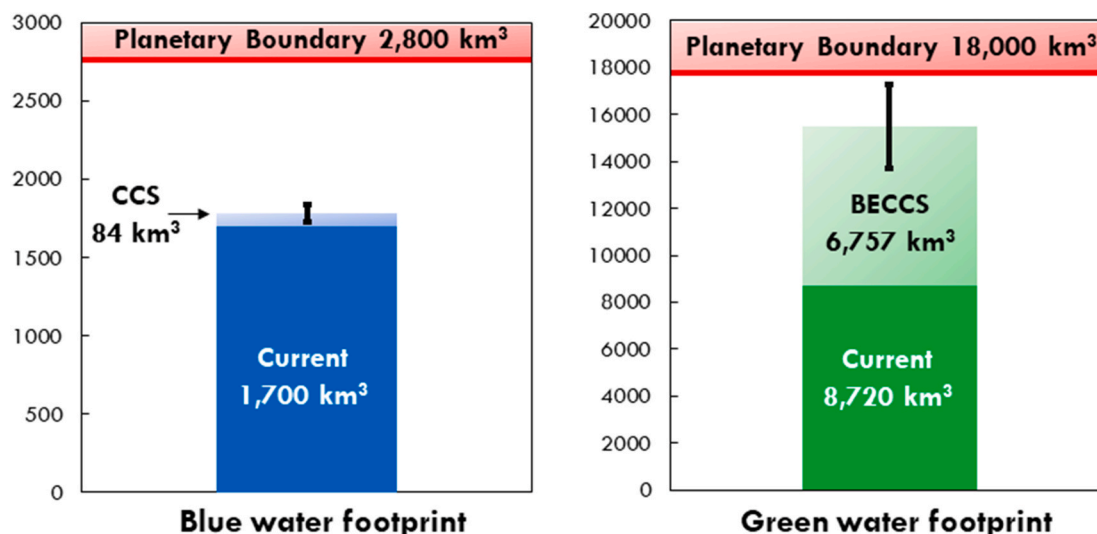


Fig. 6. Estimates of green and blue water footprints relative to proposed planetary boundaries. Bars show current and CCS green and blue water footprints. Blue water footprint from CCS is from expected adoption of pre-combustion, post-combustion, and DACCS in year 2100 under 1.5 °C climate scenarios. Green water footprint from CCS is from BECCS in year 2100 under 1.5 °C climate scenarios. The error bar ranges represent the uncertainty range of consumption use of blue water and green water from different carbon dioxide removal scenarios [33]. The figure was generated considering a BECCS carbon conversion efficiency equal to 47% (Fig. 1a). (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the Web version of this article.)

deploy CCS at those facilities not to be impacted by blue water scarcity. Appropriate plantations for biomass production to be used as feedstock in BECCS systems should be as well planned only in areas not to be affected by green water scarcity so as not to require irrigation.

5. Conclusions

Water scarcity is progressively perceived as a socio-environmental threat that could constrain anthropogenic activities and impair ecosystems. Water is also becoming an increasingly vexing factor in managing climate mitigation technologies such as carbon capture and storage. What is the global water footprint of carbon capture and storage under stringent climate change mitigation policy? We provide an answer to this question in the context of the four prominent CCS technologies. We estimate that to meet the 1.5 °C climate target, CCS would almost double the water footprint of humanity. Our results show that the water footprint of CCS strongly vary with technology. Some CCS technologies, however, consume much less water than others, suggesting that with appropriate decision it is possible to capture CO₂ in the most water-efficient way. Green water appears to be the primary concern, as BECCS plantations will likely draw humanity closer to the planetary boundary for green water and generate widespread green water scarcity. Our results show that a diversified portfolio with different CCS technologies and balanced strategies of mitigation and carbon removal will likely have lower water requirements than a portfolio relying mainly on one technology.

This study quantified the water footprint of carbon capture and storage technologies. We showed that CCS adoption necessarily entails large water requirements, and that different CCS processes have different water requirements to capture carbon dioxide. BECCS has the highest water footprint among CCS technologies and it is by far the process that will have greater impacts on global water consumption, particularly green water. There are already reasons of profound concern about whether the future food, energy, and fiber needs can be met using the limited freshwater resources of the Planet. The projected water requirements from CCS are of paramount concern and should be accounted for in the development of future climate policies. The results of this study can thus form an important basis for further assessments of how climate mitigation policies may increase the water footprint of humanity

in the coming decades. Future research is required to reduce the water footprint of CCS processes and minimize the competition for the scarce freshwater resources of the Planet. The assessment of the water footprint of a broad range of CCS technologies can generate well-informed policies aiming to capture CO₂ in the most water-efficient way. This study provides insights into how CCS adoption consistent with 1.5 °C and 2 °C climate policies will influence the water footprint of humanity in the 21st century. The results of this study underscore the importance of integrating water footprints of CCS in future climate and energy policies. Our analysis provides important insights into the hydrological consequences of widespread CCS adoption. We conclude that a water sustainability assessment should be made in siting carbon capture and storage technologies.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Lorenzo Rosa: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Methodology, Software, Visualization, Writing - original draft. **Daniel L. Sanchez:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing - review & editing. **Giulia Realmonte:** Data curation, Writing - review & editing. **Dennis Baldocchi:** Supervision, Writing - review & editing. **Paolo D'Odorico:** Supervision, Writing - review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

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