

**Meet the Press Blog**

From the journalists at NBC News and the NBC News Political Unit

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## Gov. Doug Burgum has heated exchange over CO2 pipelines

*Voters across Iowa have expressed concerns that farmers in the state could eventually be subjected to eminent domain for the installation of the pipelines if they don't agree to voluntary easements.*

Sept. 9, 2023, 8:45 PM CDT

By **Jillian Frankel** and **Alex Tabet**

NEVADA, Iowa – North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, a GOP presidential candidate, had a tense exchange with crowd members at an event Saturday over the use of eminent domain to install carbon capture pipelines.

At the Fourth Congressional district's presidential rally in Nevada, Iowa, a man accused Burgum of being a "huge supporter" of eminent domain, which allows the government to seize private land for public projects, for the installation of carbon-capture pipelines.

"What's going on with the pipeline is you're taking private property rights away from our landowners that don't want this," the man said. "But eminent domain is meant to take private property for public use. There is no public value in here."

Three companies – Summit Carbon Solutions, Navigator CO2 Ventures, and Wolf Carbon Solutions – have proposed underground pipelines to move CO2 emitted from ethanol and other industrial plants from Iowa to either North Dakota or Illinois.

"The Wolf development team has never used eminent domain in its collective careers in building long-haul pipelines and it doesn't intend to start now," Nick Noppinger, Wolf Carbon Solutions' vice president for corporate development, told [The Gazette](#) newspaper in February.



Hearings are [ongoing](#) in Iowa to weigh approval for Summit's permit. Sabrina Zenor, the company's marketing and communications director, said by text Saturday night that it understands concerns about eminent domain and aims for voluntary easements.

Navigator, which had its [construction permit denied](#) in South Dakota, was seeking permission to use eminent domain in Iowa, [The Gazette reported](#) in March.



Crowd members hold up signs against the use of eminent domain to install CO2 pipelines on private land at a political rally Saturday in Nevada, Iowa.

Alex Tabet / NBC News

Voters across Iowa and some in attendance at the event Saturday expressed concerns that farmers in Iowa could eventually be subjected to eminent domain for the installation of the pipelines if they don't agree to voluntary easements.

"You stated that I was a huge supporter of eminent domain and that's just completely false. I'm a farm owner, rancher. I support private property rights," Burgum said, later adding, "You made a blatantly false statement about me and I have to just tell you that that's not true."

Burgum said he thinks there's a demand to kill liquid fuels, but carbon sequestration can help make the fossil fuel industry more sustainable.

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"We have to figure out a way like we're doing in North Dakota, to use CO2 to reduce or have a net-negative gas in your car or diesel, then everybody can keep driving your pickup trucks like the one that I've got," he said.

A woman in the crowd told Burgum she disagreed with him.

"I think as farmers, we all know the effects of ethanol. I think there's other things that we can do with that CO2 from those ethanol plants. We don't need pipelines," the woman said, adding that she has safety concerns, too.

Burgum sympathized with her rights as a landowner, but said there's never been a hospitalization or death in America from a CO2 pipeline. A [Mississippi CO2 pipeline ruptured in February 2020](#), sending more than 40 people to the hospital.

Burgum told the crowd that landowners affected by the pipelines' projected paths could simply turn the companies down.

"Just say no and they'll move it to your neighbor and your neighbor can get the big check," Burgum said. "Because that's what's happening in North Dakota. It's been moved a thousand times."



— Crowd members hold up signs against the use of eminent domain to install CO2 pipelines on private land while Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds speaks at a political rally Saturday in Nevada, Iowa. Alex Tabet / NBC News

But some Iowans say that rhetoric is dismissive of possible dangers associated with the carbon pipelines and some say they don't have the option to say no.

"I'm concerned about my neighbors and children," said Marvin Johnson, a 74-year-old retired agronomy salesman from Kanawha, Iowa. Johnson says he lives just a couple of miles away from a proposed pipeline.

Sheryl, from Ames, Iowa, who preferred not to share her last name, is afraid about a pipeline bursting below her brother's farmland.

"One of the pipelines is going through some of my brother's land so it's got to be stopped," she said. "I am scared for every farmer."

Both Johnson and Sheryl opted to raise signs in protest during remarks Saturday by Iowa's overwhelmingly popular Gov. Kim Reynolds, a Republican.

"I love Governor Reynolds. I love 90% of what she does. But on the carbon pipeline, she hasn't stood up for the landowners around Iowa," Johnson said.

Sheryl says Reynold's silence on the issue of eminent domain is deafening.

"She's silent. She's not saying anything," Sheryl said. "As governor, you have an obligation to the farmers."

Reynolds did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the protest.



Jillian Frankel

Jillian Frankel is a 2024 NBC News campaign embed.



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