

Tips for Effectively Engaging on Carbon Management

Through our own research and engagement with local communities, the public, government officials, nonprofits, community organizations, labor unions, and others on carbon management technologies and projects, the Carbon Action Alliance has observed trends on effective and ineffective ways to hold these discussions.

- **Awareness of carbon management projects is quite low. People have a lot of questions, particularly safety-related questions.** Come prepared to answer these questions, and make sure you can explain the technologies and their processes in a way that can reach a broad audience with varying levels of familiarity with carbon management.
- **Conservation is a commonly shared value people connect on.** Carbon reuse is a powerful component in the carbon management suite of technologies, allowing everyday products people use to be made with “recycled” carbon rather than new sources.
- **People largely want to know about the impacts local projects will have on their communities and lives.** Listen to concerns and questions local community members raise; these differ from community to community. Take into account their perspectives and look for ways they can directly benefit from conversations (such as sharing potential health benefits) and impacts from the projects themselves.
- **The messenger matters.** People want clear, unbiased facts to help them determine if they support these projects. It’s challenging to trust a person or organization people are hearing about for the first time. Work with local leaders, and utilize research from trusted sources, such as well-known science bodies like the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- **When there are potential economic, health, or other benefits communities will experience from carbon management, highlight these benefits.** There are many conversations people can have about carbon management, from how it works to why it’s needed, and so on. Remember to explain any benefits alongside sharing technical knowledge.
- **Keep the nuance in the conversation.** In general, people are skeptical of absolutist framing. Keep in mind that carbon management is not supposed to be a “silver bullet” solution for the climate. Remind those you speak with that it is one of many tools we need to address climate change and preserve jobs in the energy and industrial sectors.
- **Recognize and acknowledge people’s concerns when raised about carbon management projects, and be as transparent as possible about the processes and regulations that hold operators accountable.** Discussing the oversight of these projects by outside agencies, both federal and regional, are key pieces of information to share with the public. Point to specific agencies to make the regulatory framework more concrete.
- **In general, people worry about the cost of projects.** Utilizing reputable resources and facts to explain the economics is beneficial. The more localized information you can include, the better.

