

2025 Event Summary

CO₂nect
Annual Event

Event Description

CO₂NNECT 2025 highlighted Texas's unique position to define the next era of clean, firm power—anchored by natural gas with carbon capture and storage (CCS)—to power growing electricity demand driven by AI and data centers, manufacturing, and the continued electrification of the economy. Across discussions, participants explored how to align technology, capital, and community trust to strengthen the state's energy and economic leadership.

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Key Themes

1. Scaling Clean-Firm Power for AI and Industrial Growth

Surging electricity demand from new data centers and industrial projects is reshaping the US power landscape, with Texas emerging as a key hub for energy-intensive growth. Participants emphasized that this moment presents a narrow but transformative window for Texas to lead—by using gas + CCS to deliver clean, firm, and affordable baseload power that meets digital infrastructure needs while maintaining reliability. NET Power-style integrated gas systems, for instance, could help Texas showcase how decarbonized natural gas can serve as the backbone of an AI-ready grid.

A key takeaway was the need for collaboration among power producers, hyperscalers, and policymakers to co-design procurement and financing models that make clean firm power deployment financially viable. These models could include long-term power purchase agreements that embed CCS attributes and transparently account for carbon reductions.

2. Building a Carbon Management Market

Momentum is growing for a functional carbon management market that can value and trade low-carbon attributes. Energy Attribute Certificates (EACs) for CCS are approaching market readiness, with [efforts from the NorthBridge Group](#) and the Texas Energy Buyers Alliance (TEBA) advancing credible, technology-neutral standards within Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT).

Participants stressed that the credibility of these markets will hinge on consistent accounting frameworks, registry transparency, and buyer confidence. Establishing clear rules for verification and alignment with the GHG Protocol can help unlock participation from data center operators, manufacturers, and other large buyers looking to invest in clean energy systems.

Early demonstration deals that show how EACs can help pull in buyers for CCS projects will be essential to validate market function and attract sustained investment.

3. Texas as a Global CCS Leader

Texas's vast geologic storage capacity, existing infrastructure, and energy expertise give it an advantageous platform for CCS leadership. The barriers are not geological, but rather institutional—encompassing financing confidence, permitting timelines, and market demand.

To capitalize on its advantage, Texas must continue to advance policies that will provide a legal framework for how Texas could assume long-term liability of geologic storage projects, accelerate pipeline development, and de-risk early projects for non-oil and gas investors.

Speakers emphasized that CCS should not be framed solely as climate policy, but as an enabler of reliability, competitiveness, and long-term economic growth. With its abundant natural gas, robust grid capacity, and growing AI sector, Texas can demonstrate how effective carbon management enhances its energy leadership.

4. Community Trust as Infrastructure

Social license is a decisive factor for scaling CCS and related infrastructure. Technical readiness will mean little without durable, community-level trust.

Participants highlighted the importance of early, local, and plain-language engagement that connects carbon management projects to visible local benefits—such as broadband access, housing investment, and infrastructure upgrades.

Building a network of local champions, including landowners, veterans, educators, and civic leaders, was deemed critical to ensuring that projects reflect community priorities and deliver tangible benefits. Industry and community partnerships must evolve from transactional outreach to coordinated planning and long-term partnership.

5. Integrating Innovation Across Sectors

The conversation extended beyond power generation to the broader ecosystem of innovation that connects data centers, materials, and manufacturing. Waste heat reuse, low-carbon cement, and advanced materials can tie digital infrastructure growth to industrial decarbonization.

Hyperscalers are driving a new wave of construction and material demand, creating powerful incentives to scale low-carbon concrete and other clean industrial solutions. Participants emphasized the need for cross-sector collaboration—bringing together energy, digital infrastructure, and materials partners to launch pilot projects that demonstrate what integrated decarbonization can look like in practice.

What We're Working on Next

To sustain momentum and translate Texas's carbon management vision into real progress, participants emphasized three clear priorities:

Education and Awareness

There is a pressing need to deepen mutual understanding of carbon management technologies, markets, and AI—across policy makers, industry, tech leaders, and communities. A two-way education effort can make CCS more understandable and accessible, show how clean-firm power supports Texas's economic growth, and help all stakeholders speak the same language, building confidence among investors and the public alike.

Socializing the Texas Carbon Management Roadmap

The forthcoming Texas Carbon Management Roadmap represents a critical organizing tool for aligning carbon management efforts statewide. Broad engagement will help translate strategy into shared ownership and durable progress.

Collaborating Around Markets and Implementation

Building a functional market for carbon management will require joint action from developers, buyers, registries, and financial institutions. Demonstrating early CCS EAC transactions, designing credible accounting standards, and aligning procurement frameworks can make low-carbon solutions commercially viable. Cross-sector collaboration will be essential to build a robust market and solidify Texas's leadership in this space.

The [Great Plains Institute](#) will continue advancing these priorities through research, stakeholder engagement, strategic convenings, and policy development efforts. To learn more or explore collaboration opportunities, please contact Senior Engagement Manager Bridget Callaghan at bcallaghan@gpisd.net.