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DESPITE ITS SETBACKS, CARBON CAPTURE MAY COME TO PENNSYLVANIA



By Anthony Hennen,
Staff Reporter,
The Center Square

A proposed bill would expand Pennsylvania's openness to carbon capture and storage, with proponents claiming the Commonwealth could become a hub for reducing carbon emissions.

The bill would establish a legal and regulatory framework for potential carbon dioxide capture and sequestration projects in the state, Sen. Gene Yaw, R-Williamsport, said in a legislative memo.

Carbon capture is a process that takes carbon dioxide emissions from power generation or other activities and reuses or stores the emissions to prevent them from getting absorbed into the atmosphere.

"This legislation is a proactive step to secure Pennsylvania's future as a hub for carbon capture and sequestration," Yaw said. "It's a pragmatic solution to a problem that we all want to solve — reducing our carbon emissions without

crippling the reliability of our existing power grid."

The legislation would designate private property rights around storage sites, assign state regulatory authority of the facilities, specify the regulatory and permitting process within existing federal oversight, and create a cash fund to sustain regulatory operations.

Yaw cited a study from the Great Plains Institute estimating Pennsylvania could store 2.4 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide underground. Currently, Pennsylvania has no carbon capture storage facilities; most of them tend to be along the Gulf Coast or in the Upper Midwest.

Carbon capture projects have grown since a 2018 expansion of a federal tax credit, which led to 51 new projects announced nationally in 2021. "So far, implementing the technology has proven elusive because of the high cost of sequestering a single ton of carbon, especially from certain facilities," Karin Rives of S&P Global noted.

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The projects have been beset with problems, as a 2021 report from the Government Accountability Office noted. Coal-related projects funded with \$684 million from the Department of Energy struggled to produce results, and the GAO pointed out significant risks for the project due to the DOE's "high-risk selection and negotiation process" and its "bypassing of cost controls."

Despite the failures, the Department recently announced \$96 million was available to advance carbon capture technologies to "lay the foundation for future

projects that demonstrate the economic and environmental benefits of carbon capture technologies."

"There is broad agreement that costs for CCS would need to decrease before the technologies could be widely deployed across the nation," according to a Congressional Research Service report. "In the view of many proponents, greater CCS deployment is fundamental to reduce CO2 emissions (or reduce the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere) and to help mitigate human-induced climate change."

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