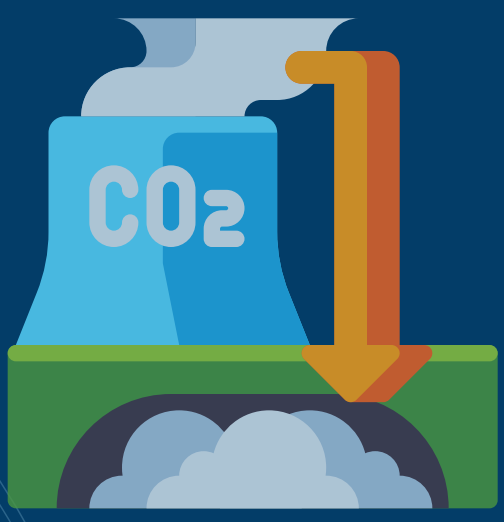
What Houstonians Need To Know About Carbon Capture

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS): process of trapping carbon dioxide before its release into the atmosphere, reducing emissions from power generation and industrial processes at the point source.

Air Alliance Houston (AAH) spent the last year connecting with people living near industrial sources of pollution in the Houston area to better understand their knowledge of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology and their opinions on climate change and decarbonization.



In many cases, people we spoke to were unfamiliar with CCS technology, hearing about it for the first time through our discussions. This raised an important question: how can community members better advocate for clean air for themselves and for their neighborhoods as major CCS technology investments are materializing across Houston?

What we learned:

- 90% of the community members we spoke with were concerned about climate change and extremes storms. They also felt that government was not doing enough to protect their communities from these effects.
- 58% of community members rated their understanding of CCS technology a 5 or below on a 10-point scale (with 10 being "high understanding.")
- 44% of community members said that "environmental concerns" were their first reaction to hearing about new CCS developments.
- Many expressed distrust in state or industry to make community safety a priority, suggesting that an educational program about CCS technology be conducted by environmental justice groups.

Currently, the State of Texas and private industry are moving to rapidly advance CCS technology development. This is in-line with Environmental Protection Agency rules and regulations encouraging its build-out and providing large subsidies for the technology.

What we propose:

1. Implement activities to rapidly increase community understanding of carbon capture tech before projects like the ExxonMobil carbon hub begin.
2. Encourage ongoing dialogue between fenceline communities and carbon capture tech funders and developers to ensure genuine, good-faith considerations of the needs of people who live in harm's way.
3. Consider how CCS technology stakeholders such as industry, universities, government, venture capital, and advocacy groups can include community members more meaningfully and throughout the funding, permitting, and build-out processes.

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