



CARBON CAPTURE BILL CLEARS THE SENATE

"Texas is going to be a pioneer of this technology, not only for the rest of the country but also for the world," a support says.

The *Texas Railroad Commission* would have the authority to grant permits for underground storage of carbon dioxide under legislation passed today by the Senate.

The measure, *Senate Bill 1387*, would provide the first regulatory framework for capturing and sequestering the byproduct that has been cited as a contributing factor to climate change. And it would set the stage not only storing CO₂, but for enhancing the commercial applications associated with the byproduct, supporters said.

"The state of Texas is going to be a pioneer of this technology, not only for the rest of the country but also for the world," **Steve Melzer**, who heads the *Texas Carbon Capture and Storage Association*, told *QR*.

Melzer was among those who testified last month before a special legislative committee that was exploring ways to mesh the needs to produce more energy in Texas while also doing more to protect the environment. He told lawmakers at the time that CO₂ should not be viewed as a waste product, but instead as a resource.

The Texas oil and gas industry for decades has been using CO₂ in enhanced recovery efforts, and Melzer predicted that as a result of S.B. 1387, more efficient methods of getting at hard-to-reach oil and gas deposits via CO₂ will emerge.

"This is a real win-win for the Texas energy industry and the environmental movement," he said.

Under the bill, the Railroad Commission, which has had authority over enhanced oil recovery since the 1970s, would be in charge of permitting and inspection. And the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality would adopt rules for making sure that any captured and sequestered CO₂ would not be a threat to underground water supplies or present other environmental hazards.

The bill by Amarillo Republican **Kel Seliger** now goes to the House.

By John Moritz

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