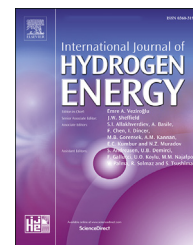




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# Decarbonization synergies from joint planning of electricity and hydrogen production: A Texas case study

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Flexibility from electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> production enables more renewable integration.
- Carbon capture occurs at lower CO<sub>2</sub> prices for production of H<sub>2</sub> than electricity.
- Electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> production is dominant for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$30–60/tonne or more.
- Increased H<sub>2</sub> demand favors natural gas based H<sub>2</sub>.
- Emissions are less than 1.2 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub> for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$90/tonne or more.

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## ABSTRACT

Hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>) shows promise as an energy carrier in contributing to emissions reductions from sectors which have been difficult to decarbonize, like industry and transportation. At the same time, flexible H<sub>2</sub> production via electrolysis can also support cost-effective integration of high shares of variable renewable energy (VRE) in the power system. In this work, we develop a least-cost investment planning model to co-optimize investments in electricity and H<sub>2</sub> infrastructure to serve electricity and H<sub>2</sub> demands under various low-carbon scenarios. Applying the model to a case study of Texas in 2050, we find that H<sub>2</sub> is produced in approximately equal amounts from electricity and natural gas under the least-cost expansion plan with a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30–60/tonne. An increasing CO<sub>2</sub> price favors electrolysis, while increasing H<sub>2</sub> demand favors H<sub>2</sub> production from Steam Methane Reforming (SMR) of natural gas. H<sub>2</sub> production is found to be a cost effective solution to reduce emissions in the electric power system as it provides flexibility otherwise provided by natural gas power plants and enables high shares of VRE with less battery storage. Additionally, the availability of flexible electricity demand via electrolysis makes carbon capture and storage (CCS) deployment for SMR cost-effective at lower CO<sub>2</sub> prices (\$90/tonne CO<sub>2</sub>) than for power generation (\$180/tonne CO<sub>2</sub>). The total emissions attributable to H<sub>2</sub> production is found to be dependent on the H<sub>2</sub> demand. The marginal emissions from H<sub>2</sub> production increase with the H<sub>2</sub> demand for CO<sub>2</sub> prices less than \$90/tonne CO<sub>2</sub>, due to shift in supply from electrolysis to SMR. For a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$60/tonne we estimate the production weighted-average H<sub>2</sub> price to be between \$1.30–1.66/kg across three H<sub>2</sub> demand

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scenarios. These findings indicate the importance of joint planning of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> infrastructure for cost-effective energy system decarbonization.

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<b>Nomenclature</b>	$\mathcal{L}$	Transmission lines and pipelines
<b>Indices</b>	$\mathcal{N}$	All nodes
$i$		Plant type
$n, m$		Nodes
$t$		Time step
<b>Costs</b>	$\mathcal{P}$	Plants types for electricity or H <sub>2</sub> production
$C_i^{energy}$		Storage energy cost [\$/MWh] or [\$/kg]
$C_i^e$		Emission cost [\$/kg]
$C_i^{fix}$		Fixed cost [\$/plant]
$C_i^{inv}$		Investment cost [\$/plant]
$C_i^{power}$		Storage power cost [\$/MW] or [\$/kg/h]
$C_i^{rat}$		Rationing cost [\$/MWh] or [\$/kg]
$C_i^{ret}$		Retirement cost [\$/plant]
$C_i^{var}$		Variable cost [\$/MWh] or [\$/kg]
<b>Parameters</b>	$\mathcal{R}$	VRE power plants types
$\eta_i$		Charge/discharge efficiency for storage type $i$
$\gamma_i$		Emission rate [kg CO <sub>2</sub> /MWh] or [kg CO <sub>2</sub> /kg H <sub>2</sub> ]
$A_i$		Auxillary electricity [MWh/kg]
$D_{tn}$		Electricity or H <sub>2</sub> demand [MWh] or [kg]
$E_i$		Cost of CO <sub>2</sub> -emissions [\$/kg]
$F_i$		Conversion rate [MWh/kg H <sub>2</sub> ] or [kg H <sub>2</sub> /MWh]
$P_i$		Max or min plant capacity [MW] or [kg/h]
$P_{tin}$		Power profile [MWh]
$R_i$		Maximum ramping [MW] or [kg/h]
$T_{nm}^{init/max}$		Initial or maximum transmission capacity from node $n$ to $m$ [MW] or [kg/h]
$X_{in}^{init/max}$		Initial or maximum number of power plants
<b>Sets</b>	$\mathcal{S}$	Storage types
	$\mathcal{T}$	Time steps
	<b>Indexed Sets</b>	
	$\mathcal{A}_n$	Plants types requiring auxiliary power at node $n$
	$\mathcal{B}_n$	Nodes connected to node $n$ by transmission
	$\mathcal{C}_n$	Nodes connected to node $n$ by conversion plants
	$\mathcal{F}_n$	Conversion plant types at node $n$
	$\mathcal{P}_n$	Plants types at node $n$
	$\mathcal{S}_n$	Storage types at node $n$
	<b>Investment Variables</b>	
	$e_n^{cap}$	Storage charge/discharge capacity [MW] or [kg/h]
	$S_{in}^{cap}$	Storage level capacity [MWh] or [kg]
	$x_{in}^{trans}$	New lines or pipes
	$x_{in}$	New plants
	<b>Operation Variables</b>	
	$C_{tin}$	Energy curtailment of VRE [MWh]
	$e_{tin}^{in/out}$	Storage charge/discharge [MW] or [kg/h]
	$f_{tnm}$	Flow on lines or pipelines [MW] or [kg/h]
	$p_{tn}^{exp/imp}$	Import/export [MW]
	$p_{tin}$	Production [MW] or [kg/h]
	$r_{tn}$	Load curtailment [MW] or [kg]
	$S_{tn}$	Storage level [MWh] or [kg]
	$u_{tin}$	Number of committed plants

## Introduction

Policymakers across the world are looking for cost-effective ways to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by mid-century throughout all sectors of the economy to address climate change. Electrification of various end-uses is gaining traction as a cost-effective strategy for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in various sectors, most notably, light duty vehicle transportation [1]. Electrification not only improves end-use energy efficiency in many cases, but also concentrates emissions sources upstream, in the power sector, where decarbonization efforts are accelerating with the adoption of variable renewable energy (VRE) generation capacity. While direct electrification is appealing, it may be impractical in several end-uses such as industrial applications using fossil-fuel as feedstocks and heavy-duty transportation [2–4], where

volumetric and gravimetric energy density are key performance requirements. In this context, use of alternative energy carriers like hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>) produced from electricity or other low-carbon sources remains an appealing prospect. Furthermore, H<sub>2</sub> can be used to produce ammonia and synthetic fuels that are well suited for directly replacing fossil based fuels, for example in shipping and aviation, without major modifications to existing machines or fueling systems [5–7].

The production of H<sub>2</sub> in the world today is almost entirely based on fossil energy sources, of which 76% is from natural gas and 23% from coal, with electrolysis accounting for less than 0.1% of supply [8]. To date, the relatively high cost of electrolytic H<sub>2</sub>, estimated to be \$4.8/kg using US costs, compared to fossil-fuel routes using natural gas (\$1.2/kg) has limited its adoption [9]. Moreover, the cost of electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> production is dominated by the cost of electricity (~77% of

total costs) when the electrolyzer is operated continuously [9]. Three factors are anticipated to change this picture. First, the investment costs of proton exchange membrane electrolysis (PEMEL) is projected to reduce substantially over the coming decades, with one estimate suggesting declines from \$900/kW in 2018 to \$400/kW by 2040 [10]. The future capital cost reduction for electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> will mainly arise from economies of scale and increased automation in the production of electrolyzers [11], but also larger electrolyzer stacks and multi-stack electrolysis plants [12]. Second, increasing penetration of VRE generation in the electric grid is anticipated to lead to more hours of zero wholesale electricity prices. Operating electrolyzers in a flexible manner can exploit these hours of low electricity prices for H<sub>2</sub> production while also providing demand-side flexibility to support greater levels of VRE integration in the electric grid [13–18]. Third, increasing policy emphasis on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction is likely to favor H<sub>2</sub> produced from VRE electricity sources rather than fossil-fuel intensive H<sub>2</sub> production processes. Collectively, these factors raise the prospect of H<sub>2</sub> produced from electricity becoming competitive with natural gas based H<sub>2</sub> within the coming decades [12,19,20].

Unlocking cost-effective electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> production at scale could accelerate decarbonization of energy uses which are difficult to electrify, but can also provide large amounts of flexibility to the power grid when operated as a flexible load. Over-sizing the electrolyzer compared to the H<sub>2</sub> demand and installing H<sub>2</sub> storage enables the H<sub>2</sub> production to be flexible and produce more H<sub>2</sub> when there is a surplus of electricity (indicated by low prices) in the system and less when there is a deficit (indicated by high prices) [21–23]. In power systems with large shares of VRE generation, the variations in electricity price is expected to be higher than in current grids, implying that flexible H<sub>2</sub> production can significantly lower the electricity related H<sub>2</sub> production costs and increase plant profitability [24] compared to producing H<sub>2</sub> at a constant rate [20,22,25–27]. Furthermore, flexible electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> production is well suited to provide ancillary services to the electricity system, which can be an additional potential source of income for electrolyzers and contribute to reducing H<sub>2</sub> costs [28–31].

To accurately capture the value of flexibility from H<sub>2</sub> production by electrolysis, and thus the cost of H<sub>2</sub>, it is necessary to model the operation of the electrolysis plant in conjunction with the electric power system directly. Furthermore, for a holistic estimate of the benefits provided by energy storage, either as H<sub>2</sub> or other storage types, it is important to consider an investment planning framework, as most of the benefits of energy storage or demand flexibility generally arise from deferring investments in new generation and transmission capacity [32,33].

Prior studies on the interactions between electricity and H<sub>2</sub> infrastructure, including production, storage and transport can be grouped according to the resolution used in the representation of various stages of the H<sub>2</sub> supply chain. Traditional electricity focused capacity expansion models include H<sub>2</sub> in the form of energy storage only, where a storage system is designed by combining electrolyzer, H<sub>2</sub> storage tanks and re-conversion by fuel cell or H<sub>2</sub> turbines [34,35]. This use of H<sub>2</sub> for electricity storage suffer from low round-trip efficiency, typically 30–50% [16], and is mostly used as a long-term

storage option to complement other short-duration storage technologies.

Studies which focus on the H<sub>2</sub> supply chain, such as storage and transport in the form of pipes, compressed H<sub>2</sub> or liquefied H<sub>2</sub> trucks tend to have a simplified representation of the interactions with the electricity system such as residual loads or only VRE electricity supply [36–39].

Recently, a few studies have evaluated the flexibility provided by sector-coupling through coordinated expansion of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> infrastructure [40]. Some of these studies consider the use of H<sub>2</sub> for electricity storage [41] or as a complete system with H<sub>2</sub> demand. In general, the models with comprehensive H<sub>2</sub> system models often have restriction in term of spacial or temporal resolution [42,43] or are split into soft-linked investment and operation models [44], all of which impacts the results especially in VRE dominated systems. Models that include detailed electricity and H<sub>2</sub> system models usually only consider H<sub>2</sub> production by electrolysis and do not include H<sub>2</sub> produced from the dominant natural gas pathways [45]. Models that include H<sub>2</sub> production from natural gas tend to have a low spatial resolution [46] or low modeling detail of conventional electricity generation [47,48].

In this work, we develop a capacity expansion model to evaluate the cost-optimal electricity and H<sub>2</sub> infrastructure needed to serve future electricity and H<sub>2</sub> demand across a range of policy and technology scenarios. The modeling framework optimizes for investment subject to a number of operational and policy constraints. These include investment limitations on physical installations according to resource potential as well as operational limitations on generation and transport. Ramping constraints enforce the rate of change in electricity and H<sub>2</sub> production for the different technologies. Balance constraints keeps track of the balance between production and consumption, storage level and flow of H<sub>2</sub> and electricity between locations. The operational constraints are enforced while modeling hourly resolution of system operation throughout the entire year. We model electricity and H<sub>2</sub> transmission by overhead lines and pipelines respectively, as the best VRE sources often are located far away from major energy demand centers. H<sub>2</sub> is produced from PEMEL or natural gas with or without carbon capture and storage (CCS) and can be converted to electricity by a proton exchange membrane fuel cell (PEMFC) or H<sub>2</sub> compatible gas turbines. We model H<sub>2</sub> production from natural gas via steam-methane reforming (SMR). The model is applied for a case study of Texas in 2050 under a range of H<sub>2</sub> demand and carbon price scenarios. We summarize the new contributions to the literature arising from this work as follows:

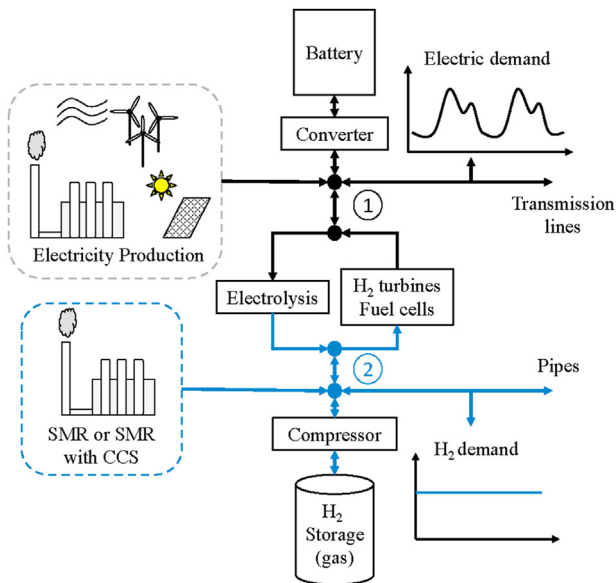
- a) We develop a coordinated electricity and H<sub>2</sub> system capacity expansion model with high temporal and spatial resolution that considers the dynamics between electricity and H<sub>2</sub> in terms of major technological options for production, storage and transport.
- b) We conduct a comprehensive case study of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> production for the U.S. state of Texas with realistic assumptions, considering the impact of different CO<sub>2</sub> prices and H<sub>2</sub> demands.
- c) The results show that flexible H<sub>2</sub> supply from PEMEL enables more integration of VRE and reduces battery storage

requirements in the grid. Moreover, increasing H<sub>2</sub> demand makes PEMEL more expensive, thereby shifting H<sub>2</sub> production towards SMR. Due to the synergies between VRE generation and PEMEL loads, we find that CCS adoption is attractive for SMR at lower CO<sub>2</sub> prices compared to CCS adoption for electricity generation in the power sector.

The rest of the paper has the following structure. In Section **Method** we describe the optimization model used for studying the interaction between H<sub>2</sub> and electricity infrastructure. Section **Case study and input assumptions** presents the electricity and H<sub>2</sub> system in Texas, as well as the baseline technical and economic assumptions to characterize electricity and H<sub>2</sub> demand, production, transport and storage technologies. Section **Results** discusses the model results under various CO<sub>2</sub> prices, technology costs and demand scenarios. Section **Discussion and conclusion** discusses the major findings of the work and identifies areas for future analysis.

## Method

The joint electric and H<sub>2</sub> capacity expansion model finds the least-cost portfolio to meet future electricity and H<sub>2</sub> demand in a region. The model is formulated as a linear programming (LP) problem, as stated in Eqs (1)–(13). The electricity and H<sub>2</sub> parts of the system are separated by dedicating nodes to each respective energy carrier. The electric nodes are connected to electricity generating technologies, battery storage, transmission lines and electric loads. The formulation at H<sub>2</sub> nodes are equivalent to the electricity nodes, H<sub>2</sub> is produced from SMR with or without (w/wo) CCS to meet H<sub>2</sub> demand, stored in storage tanks or transported on H<sub>2</sub> pipelines as illustrated in Fig. 1. A set of technologies that consist of PEMEL, fuel cells



**Fig. 1 – Schematic illustration of the energy balances in electric nodes (1) and a H<sub>2</sub> nodes (2). The system consist of several such node pairs connected by overhead lines and H<sub>2</sub> pipelines.**

(PEMFC) and H<sub>2</sub> turbines are connecting the two types of nodes by representing generation on one side and loads on the other side. The technical features of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> technologies are described by the same set of constraints, which consist of operational limits on production and ramping determined by the commitment status and balances for energy, storage and transmission.

The objective function in Eq. (1) minimizes the investment, retirement, fixed and variable operational costs. The total investment cost is represented by the sum of all individual investments in electricity generating power plants, PEMEL, SMR w/wo CCS, power converters, pumps, batteries, H<sub>2</sub> tanks and transmission capacity in the form of overhead lines and pipelines. The investments in storage capacities are represented by separate power and energy capacities. Variable operational costs arise from fuel costs and variable O&M costs, in addition we consider a technology dependent emission rate and a uniform CO<sub>2</sub>-emission cost. At a given time period, unserved electricity or H<sub>2</sub> demand is associated with a penalty.

$$\begin{aligned} \min \sum_{n \in \mathcal{N}} & \left[ \sum_{i \in \mathcal{P}} (C_i^{\text{inv}} x_{in} + C_i^{\text{ret}} x_{in}^{\text{ret}} + C_i^{\text{fix}} (X_{in}^{\text{init}} + x_{in} - x_{in}^{\text{ret}})) \right. \\ & + \sum_{i \in \mathcal{S}} (C_i^{\text{power}} e_{in}^{\text{cap}} + C_i^{\text{energy}} s_{in}^{\text{cap}}) + \sum_{n,m \in \mathcal{L}} C_{nm}^{\text{Trans}} x_{nm}^{\text{trans}} \\ & \left. + \sum_{t \in \mathcal{T}} \left[ \sum_{i \in \mathcal{P}} (C_i^{\text{var}} + \gamma_i C^e) p_{tin} + \sum_{n \in \mathcal{N}} C^{\text{rat}} r_{tn} \right] \right] \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Power plants and H<sub>2</sub> production facilities are grouped by technology and location. This allows us to model commitment and expansion decisions as integers instead of binaries, an approach that is shown to drastically reduce the computational time with low approximation errors [49]. We also relax the integer commitment and investment decision to be continuous in order to further reduce the computational time, which has been shown to be a reasonable approximation [50, p. 162–174] especially when the optimal integer variable is much greater than 1. Investments in new capacity is bounded by an upper limit that typically represents the resource potential at a given location, as stated in Eq. (2).

$$x_{in} \leq X_{in}^{\text{max}} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{P}, \forall n \in \mathcal{N} \quad (2)$$

The operation of the system is governed by Eqs 3–14 for all times,  $\forall t \in \mathcal{T}$ , and all nodes,  $\forall n \in \mathcal{N}$ . The plants that can be committed for operation is restricted by the investment decisions as stated in Eq. (3). The plants have both minimal and maximum production limits as shown in Eq. (4). They also have ramping constraints that limit how fast they can increase or decrease their production from one period to another as shown in Eq. (5). The relaxation of the commitment decisions allows power plants to ramp faster than what is technically possible. However, the combination of ramping and minimum production constraints gives a reasonable level of detail in the representation of power plant operations for this type of investment model.

$$u_{tin} \leq X_{in}^{\text{init}} + x_{in} - x_{in}^{\text{ret}} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{P} \quad (3)$$

$$P_i^{\text{min}} u_{tin} \leq p_{tin} \leq P_i^{\text{max}} u_{tin} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{P} \quad (4)$$

$$-R_i u_{tin} \leq p_{tin} - p_{(t-1)in} \leq R_i u_{tin} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{P} \quad (5)$$

Available VRE production is used for producing electricity unless it is curtailed as stated in Eq. (6).

$$p_{tin} + c_{ti} = P_{tin}(X_{in}^{init} + x_i) \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{R} \quad (6)$$

The energy balances for electricity and H<sub>2</sub> are represented by the same constraint as stated in Eq. (7). Electricity or H<sub>2</sub> is produced or imported to serve the demand or export. Indexed sets determines the generation, storage and conversion technologies at each specific node.  $\mathcal{P}_n$  represents the different generating technologies, i.e. power plants at the electric nodes or PEMEL and SMR at the H<sub>2</sub> nodes. H<sub>2</sub> and electricity can be shifted in time by using storage to add or withdraw from the energy balances. Unserved demand is penalized in the objective function. The set of conversion technologies,  $\mathcal{F}_n$ , are defined at the node they are producing. Conversion technologies used to produce H<sub>2</sub> or electricity at node n represents a load at a node of the opposite type specified by  $C_n$ . Similarly, auxiliary electricity for H<sub>2</sub> compression is represented as an additional load. An illustrative example of the energy balance is given in Appendix A.

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{i \in \mathcal{P}_n} p_{tin} - p_{tin}^{exp} + p_{tin}^{imp} + \sum_{i \in \mathcal{S}_n} (e_{tin}^{out} - e_{tin}^{in}) + r_{tin} \\ & = D_{tn} + \sum_{m \in \mathcal{C}_n} \left( \sum_{i \in \mathcal{F}_m} F_i p_{tim} + \sum_{i \in \mathcal{A}_m} A_i e_{tim}^{in} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

The storage balance for the two different storage types batteries and H<sub>2</sub> storage, specified by index i, is shown in Eq. (8). The storage balance states that the electricity or H<sub>2</sub> stored is given by the energy stored in the previous time-stage plus the net energy input into the storage. The maximum storage level is restricted by the storage level capacity in Eq. (9). The rate in which the storage can be loaded or unloaded is given by in Eqs (10) and (11), which corresponds to the installed converter or compressor capacity.

$$s_{tin} = s_{(t-1)in} + \eta^{in} e_{tin}^{in} - (1/\eta^{out}) e_{tin}^{out} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{S} \quad (8)$$

$$s_{tin} \leq s_{in}^{cap} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{S} \quad (9)$$

$$e_{tin}^{out} \leq e_{in}^{cap} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{S} \quad (10)$$

$$e_{tin}^{in} \leq e_{in}^{cap} \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{S} \quad (11)$$

Power exchange between electric nodes or H<sub>2</sub> flow between H<sub>2</sub> nodes are governed by Eq. (12). The exchange balance states that the net electricity or H<sub>2</sub> exchanged with the rest of the system is equal to the flows in all the pipelines or overhead lines which are connected to the node. The maximum flow in the individual pipelines or overhead lines are bound by their respective capacity in Eqs (13) and (14). We simplify the physical electricity and H<sub>2</sub> flow and use a transport model as the individual lines and pipes are aggregated into transmission corridors. Thus, electric transmission losses and hydrogen compression for pipeline transport are not taken into account. Line-packing for the hydrogen pipelines represents a potential way of storing hydrogen in the pipelines, but is not considered in this model.

$$p_{tn}^{exp} - p_{tn}^{imp} = \sum_{m \in \mathcal{B}_n} f_{tnm} \quad \forall n \in \mathcal{N} \quad (12)$$

$$f_{tnm} \leq T_{nm}^{init} + T_{nm}^{max} x_{nm}^{trans} \quad \forall n, m \in \mathcal{L} \quad (13)$$

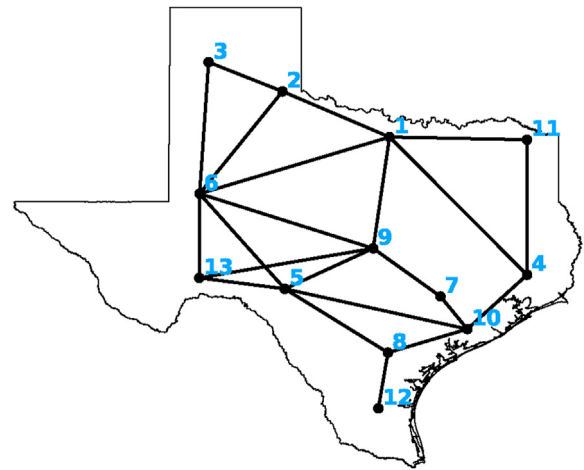
$$f_{tnm} \geq -(T_{nm}^{init} + T_{nm}^{max} x_{nm}^{trans}) \quad \forall n, m \in \mathcal{L} \quad (14)$$

The model is implemented in the Python programming language, using the Pyomo modeling framework for optimization models [51,52] and solved by the Gurobi solver.

## Case study and input assumptions

We assess the configuration of a joint H<sub>2</sub> and electricity system to supply future electricity and H<sub>2</sub> demand for the state of Texas in 2050. Texas represents an interesting case study, since: a) it is a region with high quality VRE resources, which has been noted as the state with the highest H<sub>2</sub> production potential from wind and solar power in the US [13], b) cheap availability of natural gas based on close proximity of natural gas resources, and c) significant existing H<sub>2</sub> demand from various petrochemical operations.

The electricity system in Texas, regulated by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), is currently dominated by fossil energy sources, i.e. mainly natural gas but also coal. However, the north-western and western parts of Texas have excellent wind and solar resources. Although these are located far away from the major load centers in the east and south-east it is one of the fastest growing renewable regions in the world [53]. H<sub>2</sub> can be produced at the energy source and then transported to the consumers via pipelines. Alternatively the energy can be transported by electric transmission lines and used for H<sub>2</sub> production close to the point of consumption. We use a 13-node model of the Texas power system as shown in Fig. 2 [54], which indicate the spatial distribution of nodes where production and consumption of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> is located and possible pathways for new overhead lines and pipelines. We initialize the model with existing generation



**Fig. 2 – The spacial representation and distribution of nodes and the pathways considered for the overhead lines/pipelines in the Texas case study.**

capacity at each node as of 2018 sourced from the NEEDS database [55] (see Table B 2).

### Electricity and H<sub>2</sub> demand

The baseline electricity demand for 2050 is calculated based on an average yearly growth of 1% [56] from 2015. The annual electric load from the region is increased from 347 TW h in 2015 to 492 TW h in 2050, a relative increase of 42%. The load profile is obtained by using the actual loads in 2015 from the eight different weather zones defined by ERCOT [57]. The load profiles are transformed to node level by distributing the loads from zone to county level based on population distribution across counties and then aggregating the county-level load to the closest node.

As compared to electricity demand, there is substantial uncertainty in the demand for H<sub>2</sub> in 2050 given its relatively narrow use in industrial processes today. For this study, we defined a baseline scenario of H<sub>2</sub> demand based on a projection from NREL regarding potential H<sub>2</sub> use in the transportation sector by 2050 [58]. While this demand estimate is based on the transport sector, from the model perspective, the demand could also be viewed to represent H<sub>2</sub> consumption in other sectors as well. For simplicity, we have assumed a constant temporal profile for H<sub>2</sub> consumption throughout every hour of the year, with daily consumption estimates reported in the Appendix (Table B.6). Furthermore, we exclude the existing H<sub>2</sub> demand from industrial operations in Texas, since many of those facilities are served by on-site H<sub>2</sub> supply.

The annual baseline H<sub>2</sub> demand in this analysis is 0.68 million metric tonnes (mmt)/year. For reference, this is around 17% of the potential H<sub>2</sub> demand in the Texas “triangle” region at 3.9 mm t/year based on 2015 gasoline consumption [59]. Currently, the total US H<sub>2</sub> demand is around 10 mm t/year [60] and preliminary analysis in the H<sub>2</sub>@Scale project estimates potential hydrogen demand in 2050 to be more than 9 times current levels (~ 100 mm t/year) [61]. Although a detailed analysis of potential H<sub>2</sub> demand is outside the scope of this work, we do consider the impact of scaling the baseline H<sub>2</sub> demand by a factor of 10 and 50.

### H<sub>2</sub> production

Today, large scale H<sub>2</sub> production is mainly based on SMR and is associated with life cycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 10–16 kg CO<sub>2</sub>eq/kg H<sub>2</sub> [62–64], of which process emissions account for approximately 9 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub> [62]. The cost of H<sub>2</sub> production is dominated by fuel costs, with the cost of natural gas accounting for 72% of the levelized cost in the U.S. (\$1.15–1.32/kg H<sub>2</sub> [9]). 90% of the operational CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions from the SMR-process can be captured by including CCS, with an estimated cost of to be \$47–110/tonne CO<sub>2</sub> captured (levelized cost of \$0.3–2.1/kg H<sub>2</sub>) [64]. For this study, we assume that CCS lowers the plant GHG emissions associated with H<sub>2</sub> production from natural gas down to 0.93 CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub> at a cost of \$83/tonne CO<sub>2</sub>.

The plant design, capacity costs, variable costs, fixed costs and emissions used in this analysis is based on the techno-economic evaluation of merchant SMR H<sub>2</sub> plants by the IEA [64]. They give a detailed breakdown of costs for SMR with or

without CCS for a plant with a capacity of 216 tonnes H<sub>2</sub>/day. Natural gas prices and the cost for carbon transportation and storage are streamlined for both H<sub>2</sub> and electricity producing technologies and set to be \$5.24/MMBtu [65] and \$11/tonne CO<sub>2</sub> [66] respectively.

We model the cost and performance for PEMEL plants based on the H<sub>2</sub>A production studies available from NREL [9]. The plant cost and performance is based on 60 tonnes H<sub>2</sub>/day, with an installed capital costs of ~ \$530/kW, which is in line with the long-term cost projections for multi-MW electrolysis plants in the literature [8,10,20,67,68]. The energy requirement for H<sub>2</sub> compression to 100 bar for storage is modeled to be 1.3 kW h/kg [69], and related capital costs are estimated to be \$1200/kW [67]. The electrolysis plant has a state-of-the-art efficiency of 65% based on LHV. Further details on costs and characteristics for the H<sub>2</sub> producing technologies are found in Table B 4.

H<sub>2</sub> storage in pressure vessels (100 bar) buried underground at 100 bar is estimated to cost \$516/kg [70,71]. Geological H<sub>2</sub> storage in salt caverns are the most cost-effective method for storing large quantities of H<sub>2</sub> [72] and currently widely used for natural gas and H<sub>2</sub> storage in Texas [67,73]. However, availability of salt caverns storage capacity is uncertain and therefore is not included in this analysis.

### Electricity generation and storage

Investment, fixed and variable operating & maintenance costs in 2050 for electricity generation technologies were sourced from the mid scenario of the NREL Annual Technology Baseline 2019 edition [65]. This includes the cost of battery storage, where we separately define the cost of power and energy and allow the model to figure out the optimal energy to power ratio (i.e. duration) to be deployed at each location. The cost for H<sub>2</sub> re-conversion technologies are obtained from Refs. [37], and includes H<sub>2</sub> compatible gas turbines and PEMFC. Further details are available in Table B 3.

### Energy transport

The cost of overhead line transmission expansion is modeled using a cost per mile estimate of \$3000/(miles·MW) for the first 5 GW and \$4000/(miles·MW) for the next 5 GW of each transmission corridor. This estimate is based on the costs of the CREZ transmission expansion in Texas at \$2500/(miles·MW) and set higher to account for lines in more urban areas and decreasing future land availability [74]. The system is updated to include the CREZ expansion of ~ 11.5 GW [75,76] and investments in new transmission capacity is limited on each segment to 15 GW. H<sub>2</sub> pipelines are set to have a investment cost of \$210/(m·GW) and \$560/m [36].

### Computation

The computation time for the model ranges from 1 to 2 h for each set of parameters. The parameters are changed in an automatic loop to do sensitivity analysis on the CO<sub>2</sub> price, resulting in 10 iterations and a total of 16–18 h of computational time. The computations are performed on a shared server typically using 28 threads for the optimization and up

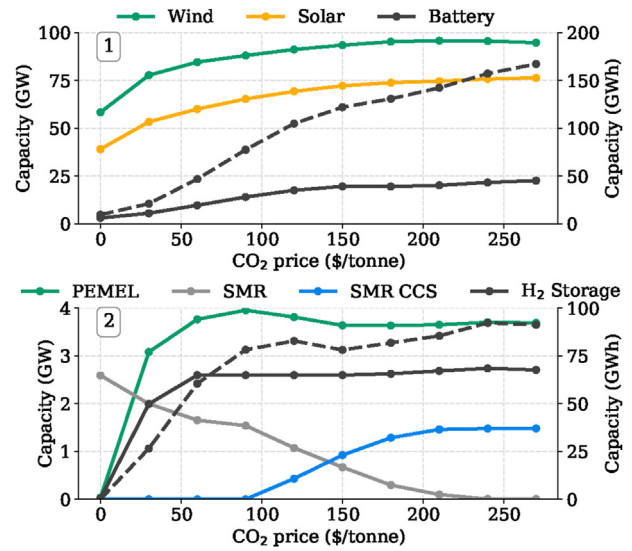
to 50–60 GB of memory. The processor is an Intel Xeon E5-2690 v4 with a clock frequency of 2.6 GHz (28 cores and 56 logical processors).

**Results**

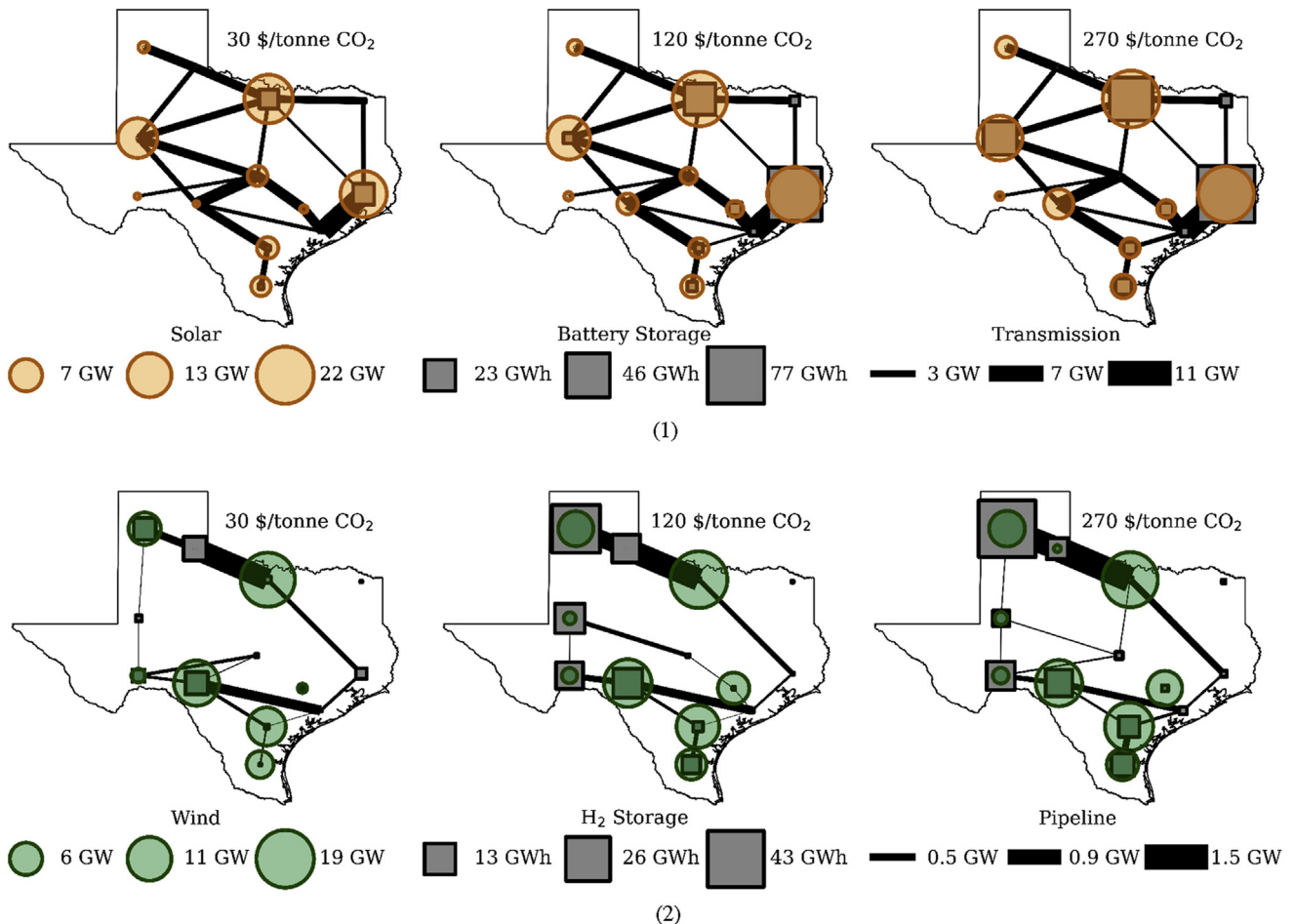
*Implications of CO<sub>2</sub> price*

To investigate the effects of a CO<sub>2</sub> price, we run the model for different CO<sub>2</sub> prices in increments of \$30/tonne from 0 to 270 \$/tonne. This range spans the range of social cost of carbon estimated for 2050 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which results show CO<sub>2</sub> prices from \$69/tonne to \$212/tonne [77].

Fig. 4.1 shows that introducing a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30/tonnes leads to a significant growth in VRE electricity from 58 to 78 GW for wind power and 39–53 GW for solar power. In fact, this CO<sub>2</sub> price is on par with the European CO<sub>2</sub> quota prices in most of 2019 and 2020 at \$30–35/tonne. The initial growth in VRE is followed by a more gradual growth when the CO<sub>2</sub> price is increased further. The deployment of VRE is followed by a large deployment of battery storage from 3 to 23 GW



**Fig. 4 – 1) VRE and battery capacity and 2) H<sub>2</sub> production and storage capacity as a function of the CO<sub>2</sub> price. H<sub>2</sub> capacities are converted to power by the lower heating value of H<sub>2</sub>. Storage energy capacity is represented by the dotted lines and secondary y-axis (right).**



**Fig. 3 – Development in 1) solar power, battery energy and overhead transmission line capacity and 2) wind power, H<sub>2</sub> storage and pipeline capacity. Overhead lines and pipelines with capacity under 1 GW and 1 tonne/h are excluded.**

(10–167 GW h), where the storage duration (energy capacity divided by power capacity) increases linearly from 2 to 7 h.

H<sub>2</sub> is entirely produced from SMR in the absence of a price for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as shown in Fig. 4.2. However, the H<sub>2</sub> share from SMR is gradually reduced with increasing CO<sub>2</sub> prices as SMR leads to significant emissions. Significant shares of the H<sub>2</sub> production is initially taken over by PEMEL with storage that can produce H<sub>2</sub> from electricity in surplus periods, followed by SMR with CCS for a CO<sub>2</sub> price higher than \$90/tonne. H<sub>2</sub> capacities are converted to power by the lower heating value of H<sub>2</sub> (LHV<sub>H<sub>2</sub></sub> = 33.3 kW h/kg), placing the largest amount of H<sub>2</sub> storage capacity at 12% and 54% of the maximum battery storage capacity for power and energy respectively, not accounting for efficiency of converting H<sub>2</sub> back to power. The duration of the H<sub>2</sub> storage increase from 13 to 36 h of H<sub>2</sub> supply when PEMEL capacity is built out (CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$30/tonne or more).

The spatial deployment of VRE generation, storage and transmission capacity is shown in Fig. 3 at CO<sub>2</sub> prices of 30, 120 and 270 \$/tonne. At low CO<sub>2</sub> prices, solar power is primarily developed close to the main load centers in the east/north and in the west where solar irradiation is high, and is co-located with significant battery capacity as shown in Fig. 3.1. With increasing CO<sub>2</sub> prices and thus VRE deployment, more solar capacity is constructed in the south and west. The transmission capacity from west to east is also upgraded in the southern part of the state. Significant amounts of battery capacity is constructed in the nodes where solar power plants are located. Batteries appear to be preferred over new transmission capacity due to the intermittent VRE electricity production, and the limited geographical smoothing of solar PV output.

Wind power is initially developed in the south/south-west and north/north-west as shown in Fig. 3.2. H<sub>2</sub> storage supports the integration of wind and solar in western Texas and two main H<sub>2</sub> pipeline corridors are constructed going from west to east. For higher CO<sub>2</sub> prices more wind power is developed in the north-west, also called the Texas panhandle, and in the south. H<sub>2</sub> pipeline infrastructure connecting these two regions to the major demand regions in the west are reinforced. Most of the H<sub>2</sub> storage capacity is deployed at a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$120/

tonne in contrast to the development in battery storage capacity that continues for higher CO<sub>2</sub> prices.

Solar power generation and battery storage charging has a correlation coefficient that is increasing with the CO<sub>2</sub> price, from around 0.28 to 0.45, which is higher than wind-battery and VRE-PEMEL correlations of 0.2–0.3. VRE-PEMEL correlation increase to the level of solar-battery correlation for higher H<sub>2</sub> demands, while wind-battery correlation stay low. This shows that batteries are synergistic with solar power development while flexible H<sub>2</sub> production is supporting the integration of both solar and wind power as shown in previous studies on H<sub>2</sub> production in the electricity system [35,41]. This is also supported by the resulting optimal duration of battery (2–7 h) and H<sub>2</sub> storage (5–36 h), and the locations for the different storage types observed in Fig. 3.

### Effect of increasing the H<sub>2</sub> demand

The baseline H<sub>2</sub> demand assumed here is only a small fraction of the total electricity demand. To understand the implications of higher H<sub>2</sub> demand, we analyzed two additional scenarios for H<sub>2</sub> demand corresponding to 10X (scenario b) and 50X (scenario c) the baseline demand (scenario a). The additional H<sub>2</sub> demand can be interpreted to represent H<sub>2</sub> demand for industry, heavy-duty transportation or export of H<sub>2</sub> to other states or countries. For context, the H<sub>2</sub> demand in case a, b and c is equivalent to 4.6, 46 and 230% of the total electric demand in the system, respectively, if converted to energy by the LHV<sub>H<sub>2</sub></sub> (assuming no losses).

The maximum VRE share is significantly increased from (a) 86.4% to (b) 90.9% and (c) 95.8% as shown in Fig. 5.1. In the scenarios with higher H<sub>2</sub> demand, (b) and (c), the capacity of battery storage required to integrate VRE generation is actually reduced as shown in Fig. 5.2. This is because the flexibility from producing large amounts of H<sub>2</sub> enables the integration of more VRE energy without requiring massive amounts of batteries or natural gas power plants. In (c), we get a VRE share as high as 94% at a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$60/tonne and 1.3 GW of battery storage, while the same CO<sub>2</sub> price gives a VRE share of 78% in scenario (a) and 87% in scenario (b) requiring 9.7 and 5.9 GW of battery storage respectively.

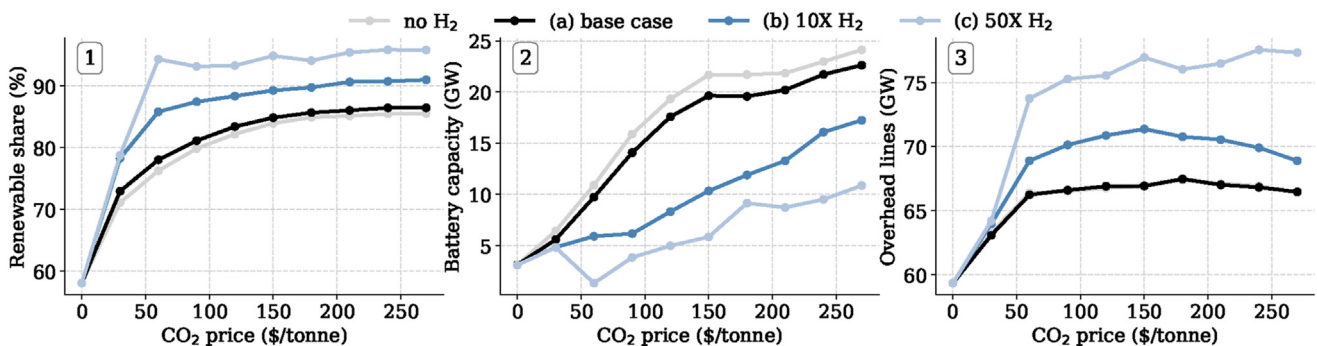


Fig. 5 – 1) VRE share of total electricity production, 2) battery storage capacity (power) and 3) transmission line capacity, by CO<sub>2</sub> price for the different H<sub>2</sub> demand scenarios.



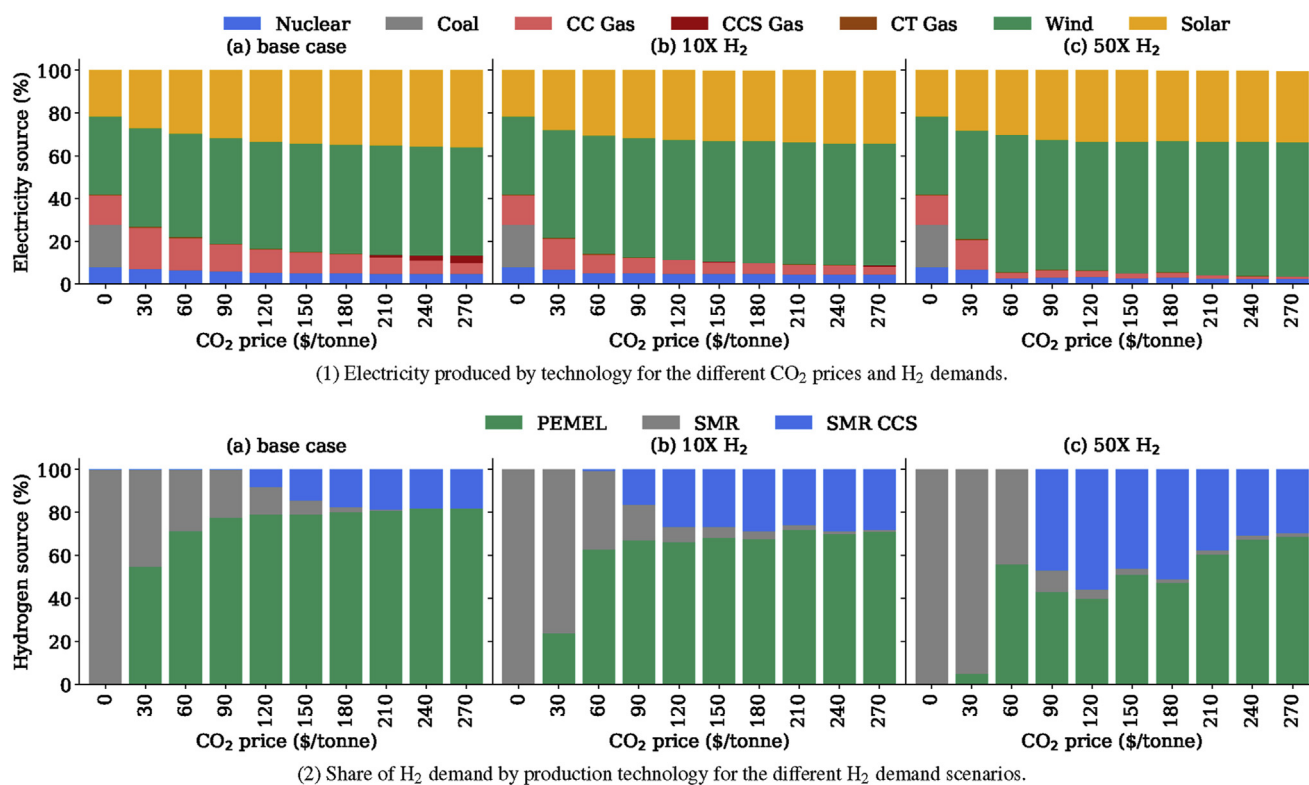


Fig. 6 – Share of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> produced by the different technologies for different CO<sub>2</sub> prices and H<sub>2</sub> demand scenarios.

Integrating VRE requires significant transmission expansion as shown in Fig. 5.3, most of which is realized at a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$60/tonne. The availability of demand flexibility from sources such as electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> production also increases the impact of battery storage and transmission investments with increasing VRE penetration, as highlighted by the increase in VRE penetration with increasing H<sub>2</sub> demand seen in Fig. 5.1. Higher H<sub>2</sub> demand also contributes to reducing the levels of VRE curtailment (defined as percent of available VRE generation), which changes from (a) 6–13% to (b) 5–10% and (c) 4–20% for a CO<sub>2</sub> price above \$30/tonne. Scenario (c) with high CO<sub>2</sub> prices results in a large amount of H<sub>2</sub> production from VRE and more than 500 GW of renewable capacity with a curtailment level of almost 20%. However, for a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$60/tonne the installed renewable capacity is 425 GW with significantly lower levels of curtailment at 13%.

The electric energy generation mix for different CO<sub>2</sub> prices and H<sub>2</sub> demands are shown in Fig. 6.1. The electricity produced from coal is reduced to zero at a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30/tonne. Some of this energy is replaced by natural gas with lower emission intensity and higher operational flexibility than coal. Natural gas is gradually replaced by more VRE generation as demand side flexibility is provided by H<sub>2</sub> produced from PEMEL. Electricity generation from natural gas is reduced by up to (a) 5%, (b) 27% and (c) 53% for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$30/tonne or higher compared to a reference case with no H<sub>2</sub> production.

Moreover, for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$180/tonne and above we observe some of the natural gas being replaced by natural gas with CCS. The break-even CO<sub>2</sub> price for CCS adoption in the

power sector is higher than those noted by other studies in the literature, primarily [78], because of the synergy between flexible demand from electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> and VRE generation. Gas based electricity generation has lower levelized cost of energy (LCOE) when CCS is included for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$70/tonne or higher assuming a unity capacity factor (based on the input parameters). This threshold for CCS deployment increases to 100, 150 and 200 \$/tonne CO<sub>2</sub> for lower capacity utilization of 0.5, 0.3 and 0.2 as lower utilization favors generation with lower capital expenses (without CCS). Fig. 6.1 shows that the break-even cost of natural gas with CCS is moved to higher CO<sub>2</sub> prices as the H<sub>2</sub> demand increase and more flexibility is available from the H<sub>2</sub> system. In general, the need for flexibility from natural gas based electricity generation is reduced with increasing H<sub>2</sub> demands, which leads to lower utilization of the gas power plants and less incentives to adopt the more capital intensive CCS options. H<sub>2</sub> for electricity generation requires CO<sub>2</sub> prices of more than \$210/tonne for scenarios a and b, and \$180/tonne for scenario c. Moreover, the share of H<sub>2</sub> to power generation in those cases is less than 0.5% of total generation (not visible in Fig. 6.1).

We compare the shares of the total H<sub>2</sub> demand obtained from the different H<sub>2</sub> plant types, PEMEL, SMR and SMR with CCS, in Fig. 6.2. H<sub>2</sub> is exclusively produced from SMR if no CO<sub>2</sub> pricing is in place. Increasing CO<sub>2</sub> prices favor H<sub>2</sub> production from PEMEL as compared to SMR. The lowest CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30/tonne results in a drastic increase in the H<sub>2</sub> produced from PEMEL to 55% of the total H<sub>2</sub> production in the base case. However, PEMEL becomes less competitive with SMR when

producing larger quantities of H<sub>2</sub> as the electricity demand for PEMEL increases and there is a limited number of hours with VRE surplus and very low electricity prices. As a result, an increasing H<sub>2</sub> demand favors SMR and the PEMEL share at a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30/tonne is reduced to 24% and only 5% of the H<sub>2</sub> produced in case (b) and (c) respectively.

A CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$120/tonne is required to introduce CCS with SMR in the base case, as seen from Fig. 6.2. This is higher than the cost of CO<sub>2</sub> capture for SMR (\$83/tonne) because of electrolyzer flexibility and synergy with VRE generation and less than 100% utilization of the SMR plant. Beyond \$120/tonne, there is less incentive to shift to electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> supply because of the reduced marginal emissions penalty associated with natural gas based H<sub>2</sub> production with CCS. SMR with CCS is introduced for a lower CO<sub>2</sub> price (\$90/tonne) in (b) and (c) as H<sub>2</sub> from PEMEL becomes less competitive with higher hydrogen demand and SMR capacity utilization increases. However, at the highest hydrogen demand in scenario (c) and high CO<sub>2</sub> prices ( $\geq$ \$180/tonne) hydrogen production shifts from SMR with CCS to PEMEL as the former represents a significant share of the total emissions. Here, the maximum electrolyzer capacities for Texas are (a) 6, (b) 47 and (c) 218 GW. As a point of comparison, the newly stated targets by the European Commission are at least 6 and 40 GW of electrolyzer capacity to be installed by 2024 and 2030 respectively [79].

#### Total and relative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

Fig. 7 shows the total emissions from joint electricity and H<sub>2</sub> production for a range of CO<sub>2</sub> prices. For comparison between the scenarios, we define the base demand scenario without a CO<sub>2</sub> price as a reference, with emissions set to be 100%. In the base demand scenario, implementing a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30/tonne results in a large reduction of 66% of the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as coal is phased out. Further emissions reduction happens more gradually as the CO<sub>2</sub> price increase until 91% of the initial emissions are mitigated. The H<sub>2</sub> production in (b) is more reliant on SMR which results in a 16–55% increase in total emissions for CO<sub>2</sub> price less than \$60/tonne. However, for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$120/tonne or higher, H<sub>2</sub> is mostly produced from PEMEL (~80%) or SMR with CCS (~20%) resulting in an emissions increase of only 2% compared to (a).

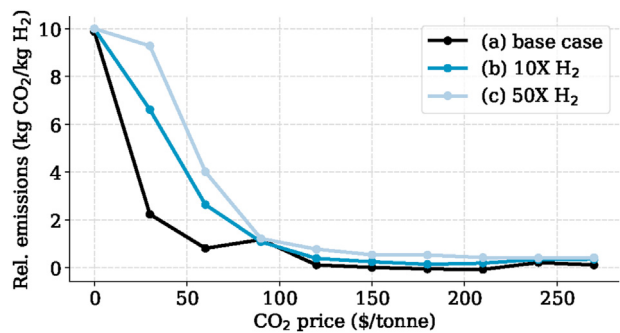


Fig. 8 – Relative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from producing H<sub>2</sub>.

Emissions increase to four times the base case at no CO<sub>2</sub> price for the highest H<sub>2</sub> demand in scenario (c). Producing these amounts of H<sub>2</sub> in Texas will result in significant increases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the base case as it relies heavily on natural gas based H<sub>2</sub> production. For a CO<sub>2</sub> price of more than \$90/tonne the emissions are reduced by an order of magnitude as CCS is implemented, and the emissions range between 22 and 58% of the reference value (100% mark) which is about twice the base case emissions for the same CO<sub>2</sub> prices.

We run the model for a scenario without H<sub>2</sub> production in order to quantify the emissions directly attributable to H<sub>2</sub> production. The emissions in the scenario with no H<sub>2</sub> production is subtracted from the total emissions in scenario (a)–(c) and divided by the total amount of H<sub>2</sub> produced in order to calculate the relative emissions (Fig. 8). For CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$0–90/tonne the relative emissions are reduced from 10 to 1.2 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub> as a large share of the H<sub>2</sub> production from CO<sub>2</sub> intensive SMR (10 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub>) are phased out. H<sub>2</sub> production for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$120/tonne or more is mostly based on PEMEL and SMR with CCS with a resulting carbon footprint ranging from (a) 0.11 to –0.07, (b) 0.14 to 0.39 and (c) 0.77 to 0.40 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub>.

The relative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the base case is negligible or even negative for CO<sub>2</sub> prices ranging from \$150–210/tonne. This is because flexible production of electrolytic H<sub>2</sub> displaces the need for flexible generation from CO<sub>2</sub>-intensive natural

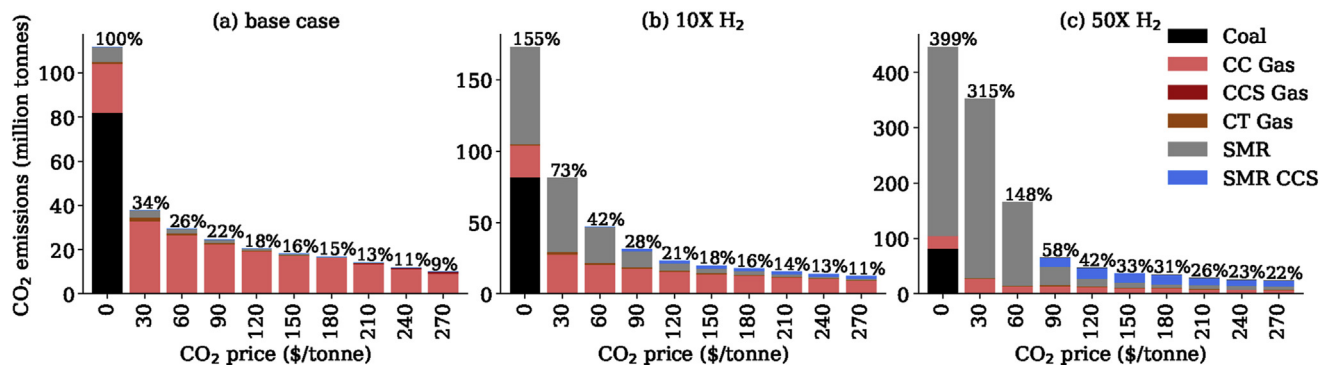
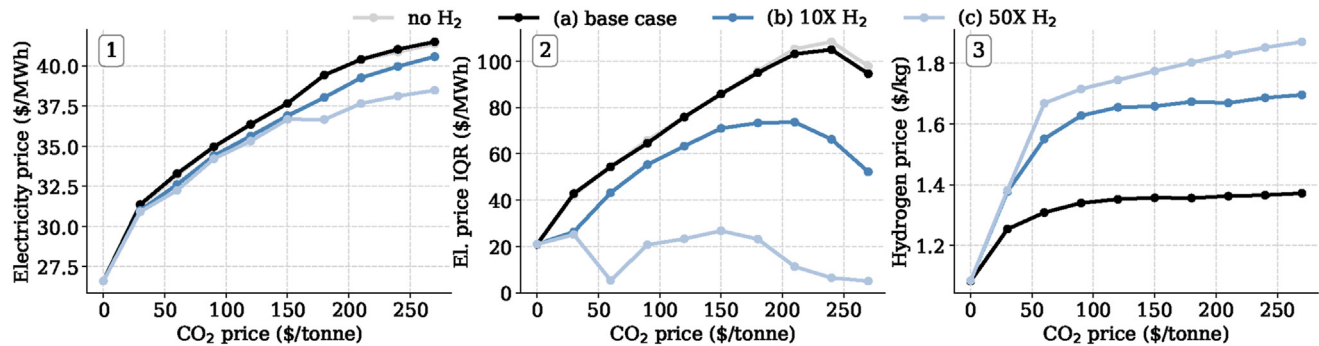


Fig. 7 – Total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions broken down by plant type. Base case with zero CO<sub>2</sub> price is set as reference at 100% for comparisons between the cases as the figures are of different scales.



**Fig. 9 – 1) average price cost of electricity production, 2) interquartile range (IQR) of the electricity price and 3) price of H<sub>2</sub> production, as a function of CO<sub>2</sub> price and H<sub>2</sub> demand. The IQR is the difference between the 25th and 75th quantile of the electricity price. The prices are weighted by the share of total electricity or H<sub>2</sub> produced at the different locations.**

gas power plants, thus contributing to lower electricity sector emissions. The reduction in electricity sector emission is larger than the emissions caused by the H<sub>2</sub> production itself, resulting in lower total emissions for producing H<sub>2</sub>. This is possible as most of the H<sub>2</sub> from natural gas include CCS for a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$150/tonne CO<sub>2</sub> and above, resulting in a low carbon footprint, while CCS for natural gas based electricity production does not emerge until \$210/tonne.

Finally, note that the emissions impacts discussed here are only the emissions related to the production of H<sub>2</sub>. Using this H<sub>2</sub> in an application such as H<sub>2</sub> vehicles would lead to further emission reductions from displacing petroleum-based fuels [80]. Using a fuel displacement of 2.46 gallons/kg H<sub>2</sub> [59] and 8.89 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/gallon from the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), H<sub>2</sub> can displace around 21.9 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub> in light duty vehicles (not considering emissions from H<sub>2</sub> production). H<sub>2</sub> can also lead to significant emission reductions in the industrial sector, where replacing coke/coal in manufacturing of steel [81] is one of many applications.

### Price of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> production

The marginal cost of electricity and H<sub>2</sub> production can be obtained from the optimization output as the dual values of the energy balances in H<sub>2</sub> and electricity nodes respectively, stated in Eq. (7). Below, we will refer to the systems marginal cost as the price, thus assuming perfect markets based on short-term marginal cost pricing which in theory minimize the average total cost of generation in the long run. In practice, these prices will deviate from real wholesale market prices as additional mechanisms (capacity markets, capacity payments, scarcity pricing etc.) are needed to address reliability and revenue sufficiency due to inherent wholesale market failures [82]. However, more realistic prices could be obtained by fixing the investments before obtaining the duals such that prices to only reflect short-term costs and not capital costs.

The average electricity price for the different scenarios of H<sub>2</sub> production is shown Fig. 9.1. The electricity price is similar

for all the scenarios at low CO<sub>2</sub> prices as H<sub>2</sub> is mostly produced from SMR. The electricity price is lower for higher H<sub>2</sub> demands as the CO<sub>2</sub> price surpasses \$30/tonne. The lower electricity price for higher H<sub>2</sub> demands can be explained by the mitigation of large amounts of battery and transmission capacity that otherwise would have been needed to integrate significant amounts of VRE electricity generation at high CO<sub>2</sub> prices. In addition, the flexible H<sub>2</sub> production enables phasing out of natural gas with less CCS and H<sub>2</sub> electricity generation that otherwise would increase the marginal cost of electricity production as seen for a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$180/tonne or higher.

Producing H<sub>2</sub> from electricity using flexible PEMEL has a smoothing effect on the electricity price as seen in Fig. 9.2, that shows the interquartile range (IQR) of the electricity price, i.e. the difference between the 25th and 75th quantile. The IQR of the electricity price increases with the CO<sub>2</sub> price and VRE deployment, this is balanced by investments in battery capacity that contains the spread in electricity prices. It is high in the base case but decreases significantly when more H<sub>2</sub> is produced in scenarios (b) and (c) due to the flexibility from hydrogen storage.

Similarly to the electricity price in Fig. 9.1, the H<sub>2</sub> price is shown in Fig. 9.3. These prices are in line with prices for H<sub>2</sub> production from wind power in Texas found by recent studies [59]. At zero CO<sub>2</sub> price the marginal H<sub>2</sub> production cost is similar for all the demand cases as H<sub>2</sub> production is exclusively from SMR. For a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30/tonne the H<sub>2</sub> price is increased more for scenarios (b) and (c) as compared to the base case (a). Lower prices in (a) are achieved by producing higher amounts of H<sub>2</sub> from PEMEL at only 20% of the average electricity price, whereas (b) and (c) are more reliant on natural gas based H<sub>2</sub> with larger emissions and faces higher electricity prices for PEMEL. From a CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$120/tonne the H<sub>2</sub> prices in case (a) and (b) are not significantly affected by the CO<sub>2</sub> price as 70–80% of the H<sub>2</sub> is produced from PEMEL and the rest is mostly produced from SMR with CCS at a low emission rate. For H<sub>2</sub> demand scenario (c) the H<sub>2</sub> price is increasing as up to 55% of the H<sub>2</sub> produced is based on SMR

with CCS, which have some emissions that drives the marginal cost with increasing CO<sub>2</sub> prices.

## Discussion and conclusion

H<sub>2</sub> has the potential to be an important energy carrier that enables CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions, particularly in sectors and applications where direct electrification is too expensive or not feasible. Here, we implement a least-cost capacity expansion model with high temporal resolution for coordinated electricity and H<sub>2</sub> infrastructure planning that considers multiple technologies associated with generation and storage of both energy vectors. We specifically investigate the synergies between integration of VRE electricity production and flexible H<sub>2</sub> production by electrolysis (PEMEL) compared against H<sub>2</sub> production from SMR with or without CCS.

For a case study of Texas with pre-defined H<sub>2</sub> demand scenarios in 2050, we find that flexibility from producing H<sub>2</sub> enables larger shares of VRE to be integrated into the power system with less battery storage, as compared to the case with no H<sub>2</sub> demand. The simulated H<sub>2</sub> production by PEMEL correlate with wind power production and can help facilitate development of wind resources in the Texas pan handle (north-west) and southern part of the state. H<sub>2</sub> pipeline corridors are required across the demand scenarios to transport energy from west to east. The infrastructure outcomes are found to be sensitive to both the scale of H<sub>2</sub> demand (baseline, 10X, 50X) and CO<sub>2</sub> prices (\$30–270/tonne). A share of VRE electricity generation of 94% is attainable with 1.3 GW of batteries and at a CO<sub>2</sub> of \$60/tonne in the highest H<sub>2</sub> demand scenario while the same CO<sub>2</sub> price results in 78% VRE and 9.7 GW batteries in the lowest H<sub>2</sub> demand scenario. The maximum VRE share increase with the H<sub>2</sub> demand to a maximum of 86.4, 90.9 and 95.8% across the H<sub>2</sub> demand scenarios.

In the absence of CO<sub>2</sub> prices, SMR without CCS is the most cost-effective option for H<sub>2</sub> supply even with PEMEL capital costs that are roughly 50% lower than their costs in 2020. However, H<sub>2</sub> produced from electricity is strongly favored by increasing CO<sub>2</sub> prices and represents around half of the H<sub>2</sub> production at a relatively low CO<sub>2</sub> price of \$30–60/tonne across the demand scenarios investigated here.

Flexible PEMEL operation complements VRE integration and displaces not only battery storage but also electricity production from natural gas and related emissions, by up to 5% in the lowest H<sub>2</sub> demand scenario and up to 53% in the highest demand scenario. Emissions attributable to serving H<sub>2</sub> demand generally increase with increasing H<sub>2</sub> demand for low CO<sub>2</sub> prices (\$30–60/tonne), but are relatively small (less than 1.2 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub>) beyond CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$90/tonne. Notably, for the baseline H<sub>2</sub> demand, the emissions attributable to H<sub>2</sub> demand are negative for CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$150–210/tonne. This suggests that H<sub>2</sub> production from electrolysis is a cost-effective solution to reduce carbon emissions, not only on the consumption side in for example fuel-cell vehicles, but also on the production side in the electric power system, as it

enables higher levels of VRE in the system with less electricity from natural gas.

The integrated planning of H<sub>2</sub> and electricity infrastructure also reveals that deployment of CCS for H<sub>2</sub> production occurs at lower CO<sub>2</sub> prices (\$90/tonne CO<sub>2</sub>) than deployment of CCS for electricity generation (\$180/tonne CO<sub>2</sub>). Moreover, our estimate of CO<sub>2</sub> prices needed to make CCS-based power generation cost-effective are higher than those estimated by other studies [78], because we account for the impact of flexibility associated with new electricity demands (e.g. PEMEL operation) which reduce utilization of gas turbines. As a result, flexible H<sub>2</sub> production contributes to lowering and stabilizing the electricity price especially at CO<sub>2</sub> prices of \$180/tonne or more as electricity generation from natural gas with CCS is reduced.

The marginal price of H<sub>2</sub> production does not see large changes for CO<sub>2</sub> prices above \$90/tonne due to the synergies between flexible electrolysis and electricity generation from VRE. However, if the H<sub>2</sub> demand is very high, more of the H<sub>2</sub> will be produced by SMR with CCS for high CO<sub>2</sub> prices and the H<sub>2</sub> price is therefore somewhat sensitive to the CO<sub>2</sub> price.

The above framework can be adapted to study a broad range of technologies and sector-coupling issues. One area of future work would consider the role for other energy storage technologies such as compressed-air storage, electrochemical flow batteries or pumped hydro, which could compete with the flexible demand from the H<sub>2</sub> system. Another area of future work involves sector coupling with sectors needing heating and cooling end-use services where thermal storage could potentially be important. Incorporating temporal variability in H<sub>2</sub> demand can further increase the flexibility requirements provided by energy storage.

In our analysis, we only see small levels of re-conversion from H<sub>2</sub> to electricity at high CO<sub>2</sub> prices as it is expensive compared to CCS and the round-trip efficiency is low. Further sensitivity analysis on parameters such as carbon transport and storage cost, electrolyzer capital cost and natural gas prices could shed light on break-even points between cost of electricity generation from H<sub>2</sub> and natural gas with CCS.

Model improvements to be considered in future work include use of integer investment decisions for technologies with large plant sizes such as thermal power plants, transmission lines and SMR facilities. Representation of energy transport constraints for electricity and hydrogen can be enhanced by: a) employing DC power flow equations, b) model pipeline's ability to provide H<sub>2</sub> storage through line-packing and c) evaluating trade-off between truck and pipeline transport for H<sub>2</sub>. These extensions will enable more accurate modeling of integrated H<sub>2</sub> and electricity infrastructure roll out.

To conclude, we point out that supporting adoption of H<sub>2</sub> in end-use applications and supplying that via electrolysis serves to benefit decarbonization and VRE integration in the power sector. This is contingent on electrolyzers to be able to effectively participate in electricity markets as we have envisioned here and regulators have a role in order create the right policies to make that happen.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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## Appendix A. Illustrative example of Energy Balance

Here we give a illustrative example of the notation and energy balance used in the model. Consider the two nodes from Fig. 1, one electric and one H<sub>2</sub>, which are connected by PEMEL and PEMFC. At the electric node, electricity is produced from wind and solar power, while H<sub>2</sub> is produced by SMR at the H<sub>2</sub> node.

The set of nodes is given by Eq. (A.1).

$$\mathcal{N} = \{1, 2\} \quad (\text{A.1})$$

Node 1 is the electric node while node 2 is the H<sub>2</sub> node, thus the sets of production technologies at the nodes are shown in Eq. (A.2) and (A.3) respectively.

$$\mathcal{P}_1 = \{\text{Wind, Solar, PEMFC}\} \quad (\text{A.2})$$

$$\mathcal{P}_2 = \{\text{SRM, PEMEL}\} \quad (\text{A.3})$$

Similarly, we define the sets of storage technologies in Eq. (A.4) and (A.5).

$$\mathcal{S}_1 = \{\text{Battery}\} \quad (\text{A.4})$$

$$\mathcal{S}_2 = \{\text{H}_2 \text{ Storage}\} \quad (\text{A.5})$$

The conversion technologies producing at node  $n$  represents loads at another node given by the connectivity in set  $C_n$ . For our example, PEMFC producing electricity at node 1 consumes H<sub>2</sub> at node 2 as shown by Eq. (A.6). PEMEL producing H<sub>2</sub> at node 2 consumes electricity at node 1, shown by Eq. (A.7).

$$C_1 = \{2\} \quad (\text{A.6})$$

$$C_2 = \{1\} \quad (\text{A.7})$$

The conversion technology types representing the loads in  $C_n$  are given by the sets in Eq. (A.8) and (A.9).

$$\mathcal{F}_1 = \{\text{PEMEL}\} \quad (\text{A.8})$$

$$\mathcal{F}_2 = \{\text{PEMFC}\} \quad (\text{A.9})$$

The H<sub>2</sub> storage requires compression to 100 bar, this is represented as an auxiliary electric load at  $C_n$  by the set in Eq. (A.10).

$$A_1 = \{\text{H}_2 \text{ Storage}\} \quad (\text{A.10})$$

$$A_2 = \{\} \quad (\text{A.11})$$

From the sets we have defined and the generalized formulation of the energy balance in Eq. (7) the resulting energy balance for the electric node for time step  $t$ , is shown in (A.12).

$$\begin{aligned} p_{t,\text{Wind},1} + p_{t,\text{Solar},1} + p_{t,\text{PEMFC},1} - p_{t,1}^{\text{exp}} + p_{t,1}^{\text{imp}} \\ + (e_{t,\text{Battery},1}^{\text{out}} - e_{t,\text{Battery},1}^{\text{in}}) + r_{t,1} \\ = D_{t,1} + F_{\text{PEMEL}} p_{t,\text{PEMEL},2} + A_{\text{H}_2\text{S}} e_{t,\text{H}_2\text{S},2}^{\text{in}} \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.12})$$

Similarly, the energy balance at the H<sub>2</sub> node in kg of H<sub>2</sub> is shown in Eq. (A.13).

$$\begin{aligned} p_{t,\text{SMR},2} + p_{t,\text{PEMEL},2} - p_{t,2}^{\text{exp}} + p_{t,2}^{\text{imp}} \\ + (e_{t,\text{H}_2\text{S},2}^{\text{out}} - e_{t,\text{H}_2\text{S},2}^{\text{in}}) + r_{t,2} \\ = D_{t,2} + F_{\text{PEMFC}} p_{t,\text{PEMFC},1} \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.13})$$

## Appendix B. Input Parameters

**Table B.1 – Parameters used in the case study**

Parameter	Value
Discount rate	6.6%
Retirement cost	10% of inv. cost
Natural gas price	\$5.24/mmBtu
Rationing cost	\$10 000/MWh
	\$10 000/kg H\$_2\$
Carbon storage and transport cost	\$11/tonne

**Table B.2 – Installed capacity in 2019 adopted from the NEEDS model [55].**

Bus	CC Gas [MW]	CT Gas [MW]	Nuclear [MW]	Wind [MW]	Solar [MW]	Coal [MW]	Biomass [MW]
1	6598	5621	2400	2168	24		
2				3999	340		
3		1540		5842		2085	
4	9729	8191					146
5				1051	141		
6	2850	3190		7913	873		
7	1943	1008			5	5744	
8	3098	2064		543	96	2371	
9	4072	1843		1680	52	940	
	4118	2490	2560			2507	
11	4854	1726				4187	5
12	2949	618		4849			18
13				998	905		
Sum	40,211	28,291	4,960	29,043	2,436	17,834	169

**Table B.3 – Technology costs for 2050 from NREL ATB technology baseline [65]. Fuel units (f.u.) are mmBtu for natural gas and kg for hydrogen.**

Type	Inv. cost (\$/kW)	Fixed cost (\$/kW-year)	Var. cost (\$/MWh)	Fuel (f.u./MWh)	Emission (kg/MWh)	CCS rate (kg/MWh)	Size (MW)	Min. Gen. (MW)	Ramp Rate (%/h)	Lifetime (years)
Wind	1011	33	0	0	0	0	100	0	1	30
Solar	683	8	0	0	0	0	150	0	1	30
CT Gas	800	12	7	9.08	481.6	0	240	0	1	55
CC Gas	800	11	3	6.28	333	0	1100	0	0.252	55
CCS Gas	1730	34	7	7.49	39.8	358.2	340	0	0.252	55
Coal	3640	33	24.1	0	834.7	0	650	260	0.1584	75
CCS Coal	5240	80	30.2	0	88.4	795.6	650	325	0.1584	75
Nuclear	5530	101	9.6	0	0	0	2200	2200	0.156	60
Biomass	3490	112	46.9	0	0	0	85	34	0.32	45
CC H2	900	13	2.8	5.69	0	0	1100	0	0.252	25
CT H2	600	6	8.8	8.54	0	0	240	0	1	25
PEMFC	1090	0	8.9	6.7	0	0	50	0	1	10

**Table B.4 – Technology costs in 2040 are obtained from the NREL centralized H<sub>2</sub> production case studies for electrolysis [9] and from a IEA GHG technical report on SMR with CCS [64]. Electricity for the SMR and CO<sub>2</sub> capture processes are generated by on-site gas turbines [64].**

Type	Inv. cost (\$/(kg/h))	Fixed cost (\$/(kg/h))	Var. cost (\$/kg)	Fuel (mmBtu/kg)	Electricity (MWh/kg)	Emission (kg CO <sub>2</sub> /kg H <sub>2</sub> )	CCS rate (kg CO <sub>2</sub> /kg H <sub>2</sub> )	Size (kg/h)	Min. Gen. (kg/h)	Ramp Rate (%/h)	Lifetime (years)
SMR	33800	0	0	0.146	0	10	0	9170	8250	0.1	25
SMR CCS	73480	0	0	0.16	0	0.99	9.01	9170	8250	0.1	25
PEMEL	27310	1915	0	0	51.3	0	0	2000	0	1	40

**Table B.5 – Technology costs for storage technologies [9,67,70,71]. Units for the different storage technologies are specified by p.u. and e.u. for power and energy respectively.**

Type	p.u.	e.u.	Inv. power (\$/pu)	Inv. energy (\$/eu)	Fix power (\$/pu-yr)	Fix energy (\$/eu-yr)	Ramp (%/h)	Eff. In/Out	Aux power (kWh/eu)	Life (years)
Battery storage	kW	kWh	273	84	15.19	0	1	0.92	0	15
Hydrogen storage	kg/h	Kg	1540	516	46	2	1	1	1.284	40

**Table B.6 – H<sub>2</sub> demand per node based on high case for adoption of fuel cell vehicles [kg/day] [58].**

Bus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13
H2 demand	764 200	300	3210	334 920	1550	13 240	2390	200 570	190 450	333 950	4250	20 350

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## Acronyms

CCS: carbon capture and storage  
 EIA: US Energy Information Administration  
 EPA: US Environmental Protection Agency  
 ERCOT: Electric Reliability Council of Texas  
 GHG: greenhouse gas  
 LCOE: levelized cost of energy  
 LHV: lower heating value  
 LP: linear programming  
 NREL: National Renewable Energy Laboratory  
 PEMEL: proton exchange membrane electrolysis  
 PEMFC: proton exchange membrane fuel cell  
 SMR: steam-methane reforming  
 VRE: variable renewable energy