

THE CLEAN ECONOMY BRIDGE CONFERENCE 2026

June 2026, Berlin, Germany

The Clean Economy Bridge Conference 2026 brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and practitioners from Germany, Canada, and the United States to advance transatlantic cooperation on clean energy, workforce transformation, and climate diplomacy.

Held in Berlin from 22-24 June 2026, the conference convened across multiple venues – including the Canadian Embassy, the dbb Forum and the Hertie School – to explore how like-minded partners can move from shared ambition to concrete action.

Against a backdrop of geopolitical volatility, shifting trade relationships, and mounting pressure on industrial competitiveness, participants converged on a clear message: growth and climate ambition are mutually reinforcing, and the transatlantic relationship remains a critical platform for proving it.

This summary captures the discussions and outcomes across all sessions, from the bilateral dialogue at the Canadian Embassy to the closing state-of-play panel on transatlantic energy diplomacy. It reflects the range of voices present – subnational leaders, energy companies, trade unions, researchers, and diplomats – and the practical, implementation-focused tenor that defined the 2026 conference.



TCBC 2026 Speakers & Organisers. Photo by Jan Rottler.

Canada-Germany Dialogue

Clean Technologies & Middle Powers Collaboration

22 June 2026 | Canadian Embassy, Berlin

The opening event of the TCB Conference held at the Embassy of Canada in Berlin marked 75 years of German Canadian diplomatic relations and convened policymakers and industry leaders to chart a pragmatic path for clean energy collaboration between two like-minded middle powers. The discussion focused on renewable integration into grids, deployment of clean technologies (CCUS, geothermal, hydrogen), and the role of middle-power diplomacy in shaping rules-based, climate-aligned markets.

Speakers emphasised complementarity: Germany's leadership in energy transition and system management, and Canada's abundant natural resources and clean-tech capabilities. Opening remarks by Canadian Ambassador Vera Alexander underscored that growth and climate ambition can advance together when open markets, secure supply chains, and multilateral cooperation reinforce one another.

"WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO UPHOLD OPEN MARKETS, STRENGTHEN SUPPLY CHAINS AND RISE TO AMBITIOUS TARGETS. GROWTH AND CLIMATE AMBITION CAN GO HAND IN HAND."

*Vera Alexander,
Canadian Ambassador to
Germany*



Ambassador Alexander addressing audience. Photo by Sanyam Bajaj.

From Alberta's perspective, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Shane Getson highlighted the province's scale, resource base, and the need for investment partnerships that recognise premium costs of new infrastructure. He positioned economic corridors as enablers of cross-border projects while noting enduring integration with the U.S. market. On geopolitics, he urged diversification away from overreliance on China, with interest in building ties with India, and stressed workforce transitions: automation will change roles, but highly skilled trades will still be essential to build infrastructure.

Monica Curtis (Pembina Institute) reframed the transition as a systems and access challenge, not a purely technological one. She called for end-to-end planning over 30-year horizons, aligning regulation and standards to value innovation while safeguarding affordability, reliability, and community trust—including Indigenous, worker, and municipal perspectives. She emphasised “the ten thousand small things” that scale impact: efficiency, electrification of demand, heat pumps, and transmission. Communication and cultural fluency are strategic capabilities for innovation deployment.

Dr. Elmar Stracke (German Association of Energy and Water Industries, BDEW) discussed sovereignty and modernisation: Germany must update aging infrastructure for a future-fit grid, build a hydrogen core network by converting gas pipelines, and evolve a regulatory environment that is currently complex, cost-minimising, and often inaccessible (including linguistically). He noted cautious movement on CCUS—preferably offshore storage—and the social dimensions of mining and industrial policy. Germany faces high system costs amid global competition, with concern that without a supportive home market, domestic clean-tech firms may struggle while China scales rapidly. Hydrogen, inherently international, is a prime domain for transatlantic collaboration—if policy and permitting can catch up.



Photo from left to right: Dr. Elmar Stracke, Monica Curtis, Shane Getson, and Loyle Campbell. Photo by Sanyam Bajaj.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Collaboration between like-minded middle powers can unlock faster clean-tech deployment
- ❖ Regulation, investment signals, and system integration are the real bottlenecks—not technology
- ❖ A people-and-places strategy is essential for durable progress. Community trust, workforce transitions, and social dialogue must accompany projects.
- ❖ Diversified, resilient supply chains (less single-country dependence) and middle-power diplomacy can align climate ambition with competitiveness.

Across the panel, participants converged on practical barriers and enablers: regulatory clarity and adaptation to new energy realities; investment that prices long-term system value; interoperable infrastructure for hydrogen, CO₂ and power; and risk-sharing public-private models to de-risk first-of-a-kind deployments (including geothermal). Middle-power diplomacy emerged as leverage: Canada and Germany can prototype credible frameworks—on CCUS standards, hydrogen trade rules, and grid integration practices—that others can adopt.

Closing interventions urged moving from talk to action: pilot shipments (e.g., ammonia), concrete bilateral projects, and reciprocal delegations to accelerate coordination. The shared message: avoid paralysis by analysis; modernise regulation; invest in people and communication; and use the Canada–Germany relationship to prove that decarbonisation and competitiveness can be mutually reinforcing.

Opening Remarks

23 June 2026 | dbb forum, Berlin

Two opening addresses advanced the conference's core idea that the clean economy transition is not a trade-off between competitiveness and climate, but the condition for both

Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter

Parliamentary State Secretary, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN)



“EUROPE – INCLUDING GERMANY – HAS LESSONS TO OFFER ON SOCIAL INCLUSION IN WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION: HOW TO EQUIP PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT SKILLS WHILE SUSTAINING BROAD SOCIETAL SUPPORT.”

*Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter,
Parliamentary State Secretary,
BMUKN*

Parliamentary State Secretary Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter. Photo by Jan Rottler.

Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter opened by tracing the initiative's lineage from the Transatlantic Climate Bridge, established in 2008, to today's focus on economic transformation. She emphasized practical implementation over ambition: resilient transatlantic supply chains and close public-private collaboration are the tools that convert targets into outcomes. Noting that "it is precisely at the subnational level where the most pragmatic solutions arise," she underscored why direct exchange between practitioners remains irreplaceable. Europe – including Germany – has lessons to offer on social inclusion in workforce transformation: how to equip people with the right skills while sustaining broad societal support. Despite structural differences, the challenges facing Germany, the United States, and Canada are more alike than different, and the moment calls for genuine mutual learning.

Metin Hakverdi

Member of the German Bundestag, Coordinator for Transatlantic Cooperation

Metin Hakverdi framed the clean economy as a core task of competitiveness, energy security, innovation, good jobs, and social cohesion – embedded in Europe's broader transformation where climate ambition, modernization, and technological sovereignty advance together. He pointed to decades of European progress in decoupling growth from emissions, positioning Germany as an ambitious and reliable partner, and stressed why transatlantic cooperation matters now: accelerating renewables, modernizing grids, securing industrial value creation, and building the workforce for new industries.

North America's pragmatism offers concrete lessons, from rural opportunities linking agriculture and clean energy to industry-grounded perspectives that tie the transition to operational realities. Canada's evolution – notably Alberta's moves in hydrogen and CCUS – illustrates how resource economies are

actively seeking resilience and prosperity in a changing global system. Against a tougher geoeconomic backdrop, including concentrated supply chains in solar, batteries, and critical minerals, and the security risks of strategic dependencies, the answer is deeper cooperation among like-minded partners, stronger coordination to rebuild resilient supply chains, and alignment of technological progress with open societies and fair markets.

“THE TRANSITION TO A CLEAN ECONOMY WILL NOT BE DECIDED IN CAPITALS ALONE. IT WILL BE SHAPED IN STATES, PROVINCES, REGIONS, CITIES, AND COMMUNITIES, THAT IS WHERE POLICY BECOMES REAL.”

*Metin Hakverdi,
Member of the German
Bundestag*



*Metin Hakverdi.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

Electrification & the Grid

23 June 2026 | dbb forum, Berlin

This session brought together Canadian, American, and German perspectives on how electrification, system efficiency, and grid flexibility can meet rapidly growing and changing electricity demand. Speakers emphasized shared structural challenges, the need for system-level innovation beyond individual technologies, and pragmatic policy and market designs that reward flexibility, efficiency, and reliability in full.



Catherine Reed, Monica Curtis, Heiko Willenberg, and Ilka Groenewold.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

Monica Curtis,

Senior Director, Communities and Decarbonization, Pembina Institute

Monica Curtis framed electrification as a whole-system transformation spanning end use, distribution, transmission, and generation. Demand is rising from weather extremes driving air-conditioning, from new industrial loads such as data centers, and from the rapid adoption of electric vehicles and heat pumps. "When we look at electrification, it isn't one thing we're trying to solve," she emphasized, "changes are arriving at the pace of technology, not at the pace at which our energy system wants to change."

"WHEN WE LOOK AT ELECTRIFICATION, IT ISN'T ONE THING WE'RE TRYING TO SOLVE."

Monica Curtis,
Senior Director, Communities
and Decarbonization, Pembina
Institute

"CHANGES ARE ARRIVING AT THE PACE OF TECHNOLOGY, NOT AT THE PACE AT WHICH OUR ENERGY SYSTEM WANTS TO CHANGE."

Monica Curtis,
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Institute



Monica Curtis.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

Managing this shift requires compensating efficiency and demand flexibility through pricing options, flexible rates, and the technical ability to shift when power is used. Electrification happens locally, so right-sized distribution upgrades matter, while policy should enable scale by expanding centralized generation, adding renewables, and stacking resources to lower system costs. "We don't have a tech problem, we have an access problem," she stated, placing policy, regulation, and ratemaking at the center of rapid deployment. She called for market and institutional redesign so that value is recognized throughout the chain, urging greater interprovincial flexibility in Canada alongside total-cost planning that incorporates health and resilience co-benefits.

Catherine Reed,

Senior Program Director, National Association of State Energy (NASEO)

Catherine Reed situated the U.S. perspective in the work of 56 state and territory energy offices on planning, reliability, efficiency, and clean transformation. The grid faces unprecedented challenges as capacity must roughly double while integrating new resources; load growth from economic development, including data centers, heightens the need for better forecasting. Resilience and flexibility are shared priorities across levels of government and the private sector, with a push to extract more from the existing grid through grid-enhancing technologies and high-performance conductors while new transmission proceeds.

The affordability-versus-decarbonization framing, she argued, presents a false choice; states are taking pragmatic, all-of-the-above approaches even as affordability rises as an electoral concern. Transmission advances faster with early community engagement, co-location along highway rights-of-way, and bipartisan, technology-neutral permitting reform. Public-private partnerships depend on policy certainty and stable permits: rules that outpace real supply chains can stall projects.



Catherine Reed.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Flexibility and efficiency must be treated as first-class grid resources and compensated accordingly.
- ❖ Grid enhancing technologies can unlock significant existing capacity while transmission infrastructure is built.
- ❖ Durable, technology-neutral permitting and market rules are the prerequisite for crowding in private capital at scale.
- ❖ Subnational leadership is a practical bridge for transatlantic cooperation on integration standards and procurement.
- ❖ Early and consistent community engagement determines whether projects can be delivered at the pace technology demands

Heiko Willenberg,

Head of Government Relations & Political Affairs, RWE

Heiko Willenberg offered the perspective of a major European energy company now rapidly expanding in the United States, with RWE targeting approximately half of its global investments there over the next five years. On political timing, he was direct: yes, it is the right moment to focus on the United States. American state and regional pragmatism and market data underpin durable opportunities, and the agenda is converging across the Atlantic – rising demand, data centers, grid constraints, and permitting reform.



*Heiko Willenberg.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

Investment signals and predictable frameworks are decisive, and business models cannot rest on shifting public support. Willenberg also emphasized community acceptance: "you have to make sure as an energy company that you have acceptance on the ground and from communities." Lessons from European cross-border trading and regional integration can inform North American efforts, while renewables remain both cost-competitive and often the fastest route to market for power-intensive growth.

"YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE AS AN ENERGY COMPANY THAT YOU HAVE ACCEPTANCE ON THE GROUND AND FROM COMMUNITIES."

*Heiko Willenberg,
Head of Government Relations
& Political Affairs, RWE*

Industry Transformation & Workforce Development in the Clean Economy

23 June 2026 | dbb forum, Berlin

This session reframed the energy transition as, above all, a challenge between people and institutions. Across Germany, Canada, and the United States technology is ready but the bottlenecks are skills pipelines, social partnership, policy architecture, and equitable opportunity.

Dr. Hans-Jörn Weddige,

Head of Green Transformation, thyssenkrupp Steel

Dr. Hans-Jörn Weddige grounded the discussion in Germany's heavy industry shift from coal-fired blast furnaces to hydrogen-based steelmaking. The central constant, he argued, is people rather than kilowatts. thyssenkrupp Steel is certifying workers in hydrogen use and maintenance, building on Germany's high-skill apprenticeship culture by guiding an already capable workforce through targeted upskilling rather than replacing it with automation. Strong co-determination structures – works councils and union representation on company boards – enable earlier and deeper engagement with employees, turning workforce development into a shared obligation. Known gaps, such as hydrogen infrastructure and specific skills, are solvable; the unknowns along the transition reinforce why adaptable, well-trained workers are resilience assets.



*Dr. Hans-Jörn Weddige.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

“KNOWN GAPS, SUCH AS HYDROGEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SPECIFIC SKILLS, ARE SOLVABLE; THE UNKNOWNs ALONG THE TRANSITION REINFORCE WHY ADAPTABLE, WELL-TRAINED WORKERS ARE RESILIENCE ASSETS.”

*Dr. Hans-Jörn Weddige,
Head of Green Transformation,
thyssenkrupp Steel*

Luisa Da Silva,

Executive Director, Iron and Earth



*Luisa Da Silva.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

Luisa Da Silva called for pragmatic, worker-led pathways that use today's technologies while respecting regional differences. Canada has one of the most educated workforces in the world yet paradoxically struggles to fill skilled roles. In rural and remote communities, energy reliability and wages shape choices: oil and gas jobs still pay more than many renewable roles, even as that gap narrows. "People go where the money is," she stated plainly. She highlighted skill transferability across sectors – noting that even offshore rigs rely on solar – urged a flattening of the fossil-to-renewable divide and underscored Indigenous leadership: many projects cross unceded lands, and trust grows when participation yields good jobs and genuine local benefits.

Dr. Jairo H Garcia,

CEO, Urban Climate Nexus; Lecturer at Johns Hopkins University and the Georgia Institute of Technology

Dr. Jairo Garcia brought a U.S. lens of scale and urgency. The clean energy sector already generates far more jobs than fossil fuels, with 3.5 million American clean-energy jobs in 2024 and Germany having nearly doubled renewable employment since 2019. The largest gaps now are knowledge and awareness: misinformation obscures the maturity of available technologies, and communities underestimate efficiency opportunities. Universities and regional institutions must act as anchor pipelines, and transatlantic exchanges can accelerate learning.



*Dr. Jairo H Garcia.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

Philip Gass,

Director, Energy Program, Just Transitions and Canada, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Philip Gass outlined the policy required for a just transition. Economic shocks such as mine closures disproportionately hit communities; success depends



*Philip Gass.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

on employment and sectoral policies, genuine social dialogue, and measurable outcomes. Financing is finite, and credible revenue streams – such as industrial carbon pricing – can recycle funds into green investment, training, and social protection. Governments must track readiness and results using indicators that matter: emissions reduced, GDP gains, and above all net sustainable jobs with good pay and benefits. Critically, policy cannot be imposed top-down and consulted on afterwards; durable programs are co-designed with workers and unions who know their towns.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ For a Just Transition, the bottleneck is beyond technology, it is skills pipelines, social partnership, and policy architecture
- ❖ Compensation must follow the transition: workers will go where wages are competitive, regardless of the energy source.
- ❖ Germany's co-determination model and apprenticeship culture offer transferable lessons for managing industrial workforce transitions.
- ❖ Indigenous leadership and community participation are not optional add-ons; they are conditions for project legitimacy.

In discussion, panelists converged on shared principles: treat workforce development as opportunity rather than threat; ensure that pay reflects the transition workers we say we value; build policy with those affected; invest in vocational training aligned to regional industry; and track outcomes transparently. The overarching message was to move from promises to programs – pilot, measure, iterate – so that the clean economy delivers what workers want: good jobs that support real livelihoods.



Dr. Hans-Jörn Weddige, Luisa Da Silva, Philip Gass, Dr. Jairo Garcia, and Ilka Groenewold. Photo by Jan Rottler.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Governments must design, measure, and iterate on just transition programs rather than making commitments without delivery mechanisms.
- ❖ The key to transition now is to move from promises to programs – pilot, measure, iterate – so that clean economy delivers what workers actually want: good jobs that support livelihoods.

Subnational Clean Economy Diplomacy - A How-to Guide

23 June 2026 | dbb forum, Berlin

This session functioned as a practical guide to subnational clean-economy diplomacy, pairing Alberta and Illinois to show how states and provinces convert ambition into corridors, capital, and careers. The discussion emphasized the need for clean economy collaboration across borders, regardless of the shifting tides at the federal level.



Shane Getson, Anna Moeller, and Dennis Tänzler.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

**“ILLINOIS IS STILL OPEN
REGARDLESS OF
NATIONAL POLITICS.”**

Anna Moeller,
Member of the Illinois House of
Representatives

Shane Getson,

Member of the Legislative Assembly, Alberta, Canada

Shane Getson centered his remarks on market access, corridor cooperation, and a pragmatic all-of-the-above energy posture. Alberta's energy economy is export-oriented and geographically constrained, making cross-border collaboration with the United States and coastal Canadian provinces decisive for getting commodities and new energy carriers to market. Energy security, leadership in CCUS and hydrogen, and a pro-nuclear stance reflect a core Albertan identity: "we are an energy provider." The binding constraint is logistics and policy alignment rather than production capacity.

On workforce, Getson cautioned against one-to-one just-transition



Shane Getson.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

**“ALBERTA IS
LANDLOCKED, WE HAVE
TO WORK WITH
OUR NEIGHBORS.”**

Shane Getson,
MLA, Alberta, Canada

assumptions that fail to match real labor flows; reskilling must align with regional demand and transferable skills – such as aerospace and advanced manufacturing – rather than a simple fossil-to-green swap. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are, in his view, the most practical tool for international exchange. Durable cooperation ultimately rests on relationships: "it has to be the personal connection," he said. Embassies and Consulates General are well-positioned to facilitate this relationship-building and should be treated as an active resource.

Anna Moeller,

Member of Illinois, USA, House of Representatives

Anna Moeller highlighted how U.S. states have assumed greater responsibility for local and global challenges under the current federal administration and can send stable market signals independent of federal policy shifts. Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA, 2021) operationalize this approach through the Illinois Power Agency's procurement of renewable energy credits, which provides revenue certainty and unlocks capital, while the state's nuclear fleet remains the backbone of supply. "Illinois is still open regardless of national politics," she stated, sending a clear signal to international partners.

Moeller stressed the state's ecosystem for international engagement: specialized agencies that attract foreign investment and trade,



Anna Moeller.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

universities with deep global ties, and anchor institutions such as World Business Chicago that operate as global nodes. On just transition, CEJA places worker equity at its center with roughly USD 80 million for retraining, investments in community colleges, and targeted support for under-invested communities.

Overall, the discussion put forward a need for flexible and progressive governance for international exchange in a regionalized landscape. MOUs provide high-leverage tools for moving quickly on concrete projects, while state agencies, university partnerships,

and established civic-economic organisations operationalise cross-border cooperation day-to-day. Both speakers emphasized that diplomacy at the subnational level is made credible by policy instruments that de-risk investment and by sustained person-to-person engagement.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Subnational actors are now primary engines of clean-economy policy and partnership, capable of anchoring predictable market signals even amid national volatility.
- ❖ MOUs, state trade and investment agencies, and university-industry networks provide a practical scaffold for cross-border projects
- ❖ Energy security and market access ideas travel well across the Atlantic
- ❖ Strong collaboration runs on personal trust: embassy platforms, city-region economic organizations, and recurring staff-level exchanges convert policies into pipelines.
- ❖ Workforce policy must be grounded in real regional opportunity, aligning reskilling with sectoral demand rather than promising one-to-one fossil-to-green swap

The Agriculture & Energy Nexus

23 June 2026 | dbb forum, Berlin

This session framed the agriculture and energy nexus as a practical question: how to integrate clean energy into farming systems without undermining agricultural livelihoods, land stewardship, or rural political legitimacy.

Bringing together perspectives from Oklahoma, Germany, and Canada, the discussion treated farmers as essential economic actors whose buy-in depends on whether clean energy models preserve local control, support food production, and generate real value for rural communities.

Mary Boren,

State Senator, Oklahoma, USA

Mary Boren grounded the discussion in the political economy of Oklahoma, where oil and gas remain deeply embedded in the state's legal, fiscal, and institutional structures. The separation of mineral and surface rights concentrates power in the petroleum sector and weakens local control over land. Against that backdrop, wind energy's growth in the Oklahoma Panhandle is a revealing precedent: when oil prices collapsed in the late 1990s, diversification through wind created new revenue streams for landowners, supported schools and cattle operations, and redistributed political influence locally.

For Boren, the lesson for agrivoltaics policy is that requiring landowners to choose between energy production and agriculture is not an effective long-term policy. Dual use, by contrast, allows energy generation and farming to coexist, preserving agricultural sovereignty, rural incomes, and local political agency. She pointed to County Extension Offices as a governance instrument for agrivoltaics – institutions that once helped landowners understand oil and gas leases could now provide technical guidance and contract literacy for dual-use solar, reshaping market behavior without waiting for perfect regulation.



Mary Boren.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

**“REQUIRING
LANDOWNERS TO
CHOOSE BETWEEN
ENERGY PRODUCTION
AND AGRICULTURE
IS NOT AN EFFECTIVE
LONG-TERM POLICY.”**

Mary Boren,
State Senator, Oklahoma, USA

Angela Heinssen,

Lawyer and Expert in Agrivoltaics Policy and Regulation.

Angela Heinssen approached the nexus from the standpoint of legal definition and enforceability. Drawing on her own experience as both a lawyer and a farmer, she described how her refusal to lease land for photovoltaics without



Angela Heinssen.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

guarantees of continued agricultural use led her to develop a new agrivoltaics standard. She outlined a three-pillar framework covering agricultural criteria, technical design, and biodiversity outcomes. A major concern is enforcement over time – the risk that older farmers, faced with exhaustion or lacking successors, may accept renewable energy income in place of continued farming, gradually hollowing out the agricultural function that agrivoltaics is meant to protect.

Heinssen cautioned against policy narratives that cast renewable energy itself as a threat to agriculture. The far greater pressures on arable land come from housing, urban expansion, and climate change – not from carefully designed renewable energy projects.

Tom Hollander, Consultant, Agora Agrar

Tom Hollander placed the discussion within the wider land-use and energy system context by focusing on bioenergy. His account of Germany's biogas expansion cautioned: incentives designed to provide supplementary farm income led to rapid growth and eventually to a situation in which approximately 10% of German arable land was under maize cultivation for biogas. Bioenergy should occupy a limited but strategically valuable niche – reserved for applications where its flexibility and storability matter most, particularly as dispatchable backup during multi-day periods of low wind and solar generation.

Biogas is not a general-purpose clean fuel but a scarce system resource.



Tom Hollander.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

Katherine Festeryga, Founder, Edie Farming

Katherine Festeryga shifted the conversation from rural land to urban food security. Canada's heavy winter dependence on fruit and vegetable imports from the United States is a geopolitical vulnerability, particularly in the context of trade tensions. Edie Farming's model of large rooftop greenhouses on warehouses and data centers, powered by solar and heat pumps, is designed to produce food within cities without competing for farmland.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Land-use conflicts between agriculture and clean energy are not inevitable – coexistence requires deliberate contract design, regulatory standards, and enforcement mechanisms.
- ❖ Dual use of land should become the default presumption for land with recent agricultural use, ensuring food production continues alongside energy generation.
- ❖ Bioenergy must be deployed strategically, reserved for resilience gaps in the system rather than used as a general-purpose fuel.
- ❖ Urban food systems – including data center greenhouses – extend the agriculture-energy nexus beyond conventional farm landscapes.



*Katherine Festeryga.
Photo by Jan Röttler.*

The data center greenhouse concept – which uses waste heat from computing infrastructure to support food production – turns a rapidly expanding urban asset class into a platform for climate-resilient agriculture. Key barriers have not been developer interest but insurance, water-risk concerns, and the complexity of novel arrangements in untested jurisdictions.

For successful clean energy integration in agriculture, there must be institutions that support learning, negotiation, and long-term stewardship. The transition works better when farmers, landowners, and innovators have practical tools that fit local realities. Land-use conflicts are not inevitable if policy, contracts, and infrastructure are designed around coexistence rather than competition.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ **Transatlantic exchange is valuable precisely because each context brings a different piece of the puzzle: Oklahoma's rural political economy, Germany's legal detail, and Canada's urban innovation.**

State-of-Play of Transatlantic Energy Diplomacy

23 June 2026 | dbb forum, Berlin

The closing panel brought together legislators, diplomats, and researchers to take stock of where transatlantic energy diplomacy stands in terms of execution. Against a backdrop of active geopolitical conflicts, and mounting industrial pressures, speakers argued that the clean economy transition has entered its hardest phase: moving from target-setting into structural delivery. The policy frame, participants agreed, is visibly shifting from broad green transformation to defensive and competitive Clean Industrial Deals, with energy diplomacy increasingly defined by critical mineral security, supply chain resilience, and large-scale electrification infrastructure.



Brian Chavez, Dr. Susanne Dröge, Anne-Mareike Vanselow, Shane Getson, Mary Boren and Ilka Groenewold. Photo by Jan Rottler.

**“TRADITIONAL
MULTILATERAL FORA
SUCH AS THE G7 ARE
STRUGGLING TO SUSTAIN
CONSTRUCTIVE CLIMATE
DIALOGUES UNDER THE
GEOPOLITICAL
PRESSURES.”**

*Dr. Susanne Dröge,
Senior Fellow, SWP*

Dr. Susanne Dröge,

Senior Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

Dr. Susanne Dröge anchored the session's geopolitical framing. Ongoing conflicts have systematically drained momentum from international cooperation networks, normalizing fossil fuel supply disruptions and economic instability for global industries. Traditional multilateral fora such as the G7 are struggling to sustain constructive climate dialogues under these pressures. The policy response is a clear paradigm shift: the era of Green Deals is giving way to Clean Industrial Deals, with energy diplomacy transitioning towards an agenda dominated by critical minerals, raw materials, and electrification infrastructure.



*Dr. Susanne Dröge.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

Germany exemplifies the dilemma facing advanced economies: after years of ambitious climate signaling, the country is now confronting a hard legislative

implementation phase. Acute labor market constraints, intense global competition, and sustained high energy prices are threatening the survival of its classic energy-intensive industrial core. China's aggressive consolidation of clean-technology value chains – driven in part by a currency estimated to be undervalued by up to 40% – compounds this pressure, pushing Western nations to look towards subnational alliances to secure alternative value chains.

Anne-Mareike Vanselow,

Head of Division - Climate Partnerships, Bilateral Climate Cooperation, International Climate Initiative, Federal Foreign Office, Germany



*Anne-Mareike Vanselow.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

Anne-Mareike Vanselow brought the perspective of the Federal Foreign Office to the panel's geopolitical framing. Energy diplomacy has become inseparable from industrial security policy: who controls critical mineral supply chains, who sets standards for electrification infrastructure, and who builds the trade relationships that underpin the clean economy will shape geopolitical influence for decades. In this environment, the transatlantic relationship carries weight – not simply as a values alliance, but also as a practical platform for building credible, alternative value chains outside of China's consolidating grip. Bilateral and subnational partnerships have become more valuable precisely because multilateral processes are slow. The Federal Foreign Office sees direct state-to-province and city-to-city relationships as essential connective tissue, capable of moving faster than federal negotiations while laying the groundwork for broader agreements.

“THE FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE SEES DIRECT STATE-TO-PROVINCE AND CITY-TO-CITY RELATIONSHIPS AS ESSENTIAL CONNECTIVE TISSUE, CAPABLE OF MOVING FASTER THAN FEDERAL NEGOTIATIONS.”

*Anne-Mareike Vanselow,
Head of Division - Climate Partnerships, Bilateral Climate Cooperation, International Climate Initiative, Federal Foreign Office, Germany*

Brian Chavez,

State Senator, Ohio, USA

Brian Chavez grounded the discussion in Ohio's industrial and energy realities. Lacking the natural wind and solar intensity of states such as Texas or New Mexico, Ohio relies on its rich natural gas deposits to power a heavy manufacturing base. Together with West Virginia and Pennsylvania, the Appalachian region represents the second-largest natural gas producing zone in the world – a resource endowment that shapes every energy decision the state makes. On infrastructure, optimization must take precedent over ideology. Reconductoring existing transmission lines, for example, delivers meaningful capacity gains without the regulatory delays of new builds, though it requires systemic rather than piecemeal commitment. Chavez identified a concrete transatlantic opportunity: processing Ohio- extracted natural gas into



*Brian Chavez.
Photo by Jan Rottler.*

ethylene and converting it to polyethylene tablets for direct supply into Germany's downstream manufacturing sector. Ohio's energy agnostic legislative posture, which has eliminated artificial subsidies for both coal and nuclear generation, allows market to drive grid development rather than political preference.

Shane Getson,

Member of the Legislative Assembly, Alberta, Canada

Alberta holds the world's fourth-largest oil deposits and eighth-largest natural gas reserves, and it maintains a USD 185 billion trade relationship with the United States. Its trade footprint with Germany, by contrast, remains under USD 1 billion – a gap both governments see as an opportunity. Achieving net-zero targets requires a roughly tenfold increase in global mining volumes for base infrastructure metals. On hydrogen, Alberta has commercial partnerships with German firms alongside research on hydrogen-blended heavy diesel fleets and live residential hydrogen test beds. The theme of National Economic Corridors is important here: pre-approved, independently managed pathways connecting ports, industrial nodes, and extraction zones, with rights-of-way wide enough to co-locate rail, power lines, fiber, water, and hydrogen pipelines.



Shane Getson.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

Mary Boren,

State Senator, Oklahoma, USA

Mary Boren offered Oklahoma's perspective on the tension between existing fossil energy strengths and the imperatives of diversification. Oklahoma remains heavily reliant on LNG production and university-driven fracking innovation for state revenues and public education funding. The immediate European demand for imported LNG presents a real economic opportunity – but one that is fundamentally time-limited as international climate objectives advance. Failure to diversify leaves the state structurally exposed when global demand inevitably pivots. Oklahoma's response is an all-of-the-above strategy: large-scale wind and solar deployment, regional nuclear options, and hydrogen pipeline legislation developed during earlier incentive windows. Boren also highlighted the potential of naturally occurring geological hydrogen – sub-surface chemical reactions that produce pure hydrogen streams without the energy cost of electrolysis – with active mapping underway across Oklahoma, Saskatchewan, and North Dakota. Bringing legislators from extraction-dependent districts into international fora such as this one, she noted, is part of the strategy: grounding global conversations in real regional constraints tends to produce more durable outcomes than top-down mandates.



Mary Boren.
Photo by Jan Rottler.

KEY EVENT TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Transatlantic energy diplomacy is moving from targets to delivery, with permitting, investment certainty, and infrastructure build out as the real constraints.
- ❖ Critical minerals, supply chain resilience, and electrification infrastructure increasingly define the agenda, beyond broad climate ambition alone.
- ❖ States and provinces can move faster than federal politics and anchor practical cooperation through corridors, trade links, and repeatable projects.
- ❖ Net zero requires more extraction and linear infrastructure, yet current approval timelines in many Western systems remain incompatible with climate timelines.

Closing Remarks

23 June 2026 | dbb forum, Berlin

Canadian Ambassador Alexander closed the conference by marking the transition from aspirational goals to concrete, structured execution.

Vera Alexander,

Ambassador of Canada to Germany



*Vera Alexander.
Photo by Jan Rottler*

**“ECONOMIC GROWTH
MUST BE PURSUED WITH
A CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS
APPROACH”**

*Vera Alexander,
Ambassador of Canada to
Germany*

International and transatlantic cooperation is essential – specifically the G7 and the Canada-Germany bilateral relationship – to secure clean energy supply chains, advance critical mineral partnerships, and ensure a socially inclusive economic transition. Framed within the Clean Economy Bridge Annual Conference 2026, the closing remarks centered on aligning policy with implementation to scale electrification, hydrogen, and clean-technology innovation.

Ambassador Alexander returned to the theme of complementarity that had anchored the opening session: Germany's system integration and transition management strengths alongside Canada's resource base and technology capabilities. Economic growth must be pursued with a climate-conscious approach. Ambition can advance together when open markets, secure supply chains, and multilateral cooperation reinforce one another.

The Clean Economy Bridge Annual Conference 2026 concluded on June 24th with closed workshop for the TCB Research Fellowship as well as site visits for the Canadian and U.S. delegations.

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