



RE: Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

I write as a private citizen, and as a member of the PA House of Representatives, to offer my strong support of Pennsylvania joining RGGI, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

The impacts of the climate crisis have become clear, from higher temperatures and more dangerous storms right here in Pennsylvania, to wildfires in western states and more devastating hurricanes in the southern US. As the fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the nation, Pennsylvania has a responsibility to lead in implementing climate solutions and reducing emissions. Joining RGGI is a key step towards that goal.

Over the past twelve years, RGGI has proven to be the most successful state-level program in the nation when it comes to addressing greenhouse gas emissions. From 2008 through 2018, carbon pollution has decreased by 47% in participating RGGI states, outpacing the rest of the country by 90% . If Pennsylvania joins RGGI, it's projected to reduce the commonwealth's carbon emissions by a massive 188 million tons by 2030 -- equivalent to taking more than 36 million cars off the road. Reducing emissions from power plants also has tremendous health benefits. Lower air pollution in RGGI states has led to significantly fewer premature deaths, heart attacks, and respiratory illnesses, something that impacts residents of all ages in my district. Studies show that by joining RGGI, Pennsylvania could prevent hundreds of premature deaths from respiratory illnesses, and avoid 30,000 hospital visits for respiratory related illnesses. At a time when public health is a top priority for most Pennsylvanians, taking steps towards better air quality should be a top priority for the Commonwealth.

RGGI is also expected to offer Pennsylvania significant economic benefits. The initiative is projected to create 27,000 new jobs in Pennsylvania and put nearly \$2 billion into the state's economy over the next decade alone. Studies have also shown that the cost of implementing RGGI is negligible for ratepayers, and if done correctly, will actually save consumers money. In fact, electricity prices have fallen by 5.7% in RGGI states, while prices have increased in the rest of the country by 8.6%. During these times of financial uncertainty for so many Pennsylvanians, my constituents would certainly benefit from these cost reductions.

As you are aware, Article 1 Section 27 of the PA Constitution grants every Pennsylvanian "a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment." By reducing power plant emissions under RGGI, we work to uphold that mandate. Through this program, Pennsylvania can drive down climate and air pollution, inject revenue into our state's economy, and create thousands of family sustaining jobs right here in the commonwealth.

It has taken too long for there to be broad agreement that climate change exists, and we have wasted valuable time debating this fact when we could have been creating solutions. The clock is ticking and we must act immediately to address climate change and its negative impact on our commonwealth and our planet. I urge you to approve the plan for Pennsylvania to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.