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House of Representatives
 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
 HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

HEALTH
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 URBAN AFFAIRS

January 14, 2021

On Monday, December 14, 2020, I spoke in favor of Pennsylvania joining RGGI. Due to the time constraints, I was not able to verbalize my recommendations for modifications to the current proposal. I ask the following points be considered:

- First, I ask that residents of the frontline environmental justice communities and the people who currently rely on employment in this sector are the ones prioritized in the rule making. The money raise through RGGI should be invested back into the communities that have been disproportionately harmed by the fossil fuel industry in the form of schools, sustainable infrastructure. Funds raised should also prioritize a fair and just transition to family-sustaining jobs for workers who are currently being displaced in the fossil fuel energy production sector.
- Second, I ask the DEP to ensure they do not create a mechanism where polluters are allowed to continue to emit without actually lowering their emissions. The rules should reflect dynamic monitoring of public health and allow for the cap-and-invest program to be modified so that the burden of harm does not continue to fall on the families that live in the shadow of these facilities.
- Third, the Department of Environmental Protection should not allow certain fossil fuel power plants (i.e., coal waste fired power plants and combined heat and power energy sources) to continue to allow the public to bear the burden of their pollution. RGGI can be tailored to fit the needs of the Commonwealth. By allowing certain fossil fuel power plants to not pay for their emissions, the state loses one of the central pillars of an effective cap-and-invest program. Instead, if the RGGI program charged a reduced rate for the same power plants, the goal of lowering emission levels and generating funds are both met without the burden of pollution falling on the state and the taxpayer.

- Finally, when issuing air permits the DEP should ensure the process is comprehensive, accessible, and transparent with residents that will be impacted by a power plant's operations. Permitting should be holistic and consider the vulnerable populations, community benefit, public health consequences, vicinity to schools and long-term care facilities, and residents' testimony when making the final decisions. Local control should be respected and residents should have easy access to these permits.

Joining RGGI is not the panacea to our environmental and economic challenges, but it is an important and significant step in combating global climate change with the proper modifications.

I thank the Environmental Quality Board for the opportunity to submit additional public comment and look forward to working towards Pennsylvania's participation as a full and active member of RGGI.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Innamorato". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Sara Innamorato, Member

21st Legislative District