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Senate of Pennsylvania

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February 3, 2020

Mr. George D. Bedwick, Chairman
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Chairman Bedwick,

I am writing in strong support of the Proposed Rulemaking, CO2 Budget Trading Program (25 PA. Code Ch. 145). Upon detailed review of the proposed rule, I find the benefits are unquestionable and risks associated with delay unconscionable and urge approval and implementation of the provisions presented.

The proposed rule would enable our Commonwealth's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). If enabled, RGGI is expected to reduce CO2 emissions by over 188 million tons over the course of the next decade. This reduction will have a substantial and immediate impact on our Commonwealth's overall contribution toward global climate change caused by greenhouse gas. Here in Pennsylvania, we have witnessed a long-term warming of over 1.8 degrees fahrenheit over the past century directly due to greenhouse gas emissions. Studies project that the Northeast region of the United States, including Pennsylvania, will see the largest temperature increase in the country of more than 3.6 degrees fahrenheit when compared to the preindustrial era. This is simply unsustainable as increased temperatures are known to be direct contributors to significant changes in precipitation and extreme weather events such as floods, heavier snowfalls, heat waves, and drought. These events contribute to damage to our roadways, increased power outages, and significant impacts to our agricultural industry.

Further, rising temperatures and climate change have real and significant impacts to the health and wellbeing of our Commonwealth's citizens. Studies have demonstrated that climate change, and its subsequent impacts to critical determinants of health quality such as clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food, and secure housing, will result in increases of childhood asthma, preterm births and low birth weights, and illnesses caused by severe influenza outbreaks and disease carriers such as mosquitos and ticks. We have the opportunity to avoid

these devastating impacts by enacting this necessary and needed rule, ensuring our participation in RGGI, and engaging as a true partner in improving environmental quality and public health for current and future generations.

When speaking about the need for this rule, I am often questioned on if Pennsylvania's involvement would have a real and significant impact on the overall climate change problem. In response, I must remind skeptics that our Commonwealth's electricity generation sector alone emits a greater volume of CO₂ than the entire national output from countries such as Greece, Singapore, Portugal, and Peru. Not only will Pennsylvania's participation in RGGI improve global climate conditions, it is our responsibility as a to act on this rule to ensure the aforementioned harm is not realized. Further, RGGI is a "cap and invest" program that reduces CO₂ emissions and invests in energy efficiency measures, renewable energy technology, and CO₂ emissions abatement technologies focused on the future of clean and renewable energy. These efforts, partnered provisions of this rule focused on direct bill assistance programs, will save consumers money and help support business throughout the Commonwealth.

We know that, overall, states that have joined RGGI, benefit not only with improved air and water quality, but also economically. Studies reviewing economic outcomes of RGGI participating states report that they added between \$1.3 and \$1.6 billion in net economic value during the study periods. In Pennsylvania, it is estimated that during the very first year of RGGI, our Commonwealth will realize approximately \$300 million in proceeds that will be directly used in the elimination of air pollution. During this period of budget uncertainty, it would be foolish and fiscally irresponsible to ignore this significant economic investment in our Commonwealth's future.

While the economic and public health cost savings are unquestionable, my focus and primary motivation for supporting this proposed rule and our involvement in RGGI is the environmental crisis that is unfolding before us. We have a limited window to act in order to mitigate unprecedented harm to our Commonwealth, our country, and our planet. Joining RGGI is a small but significant step in combating global climate change. As an elected member of the Pennsylvania Senate, serving constituents in Chester, Montgomery, and Berks counties (three of the five Pennsylvania counties designated marginal nonattainment areas for the 2015 ozone national ambient air quality standards), it is my responsibility to advocate for the approval and immediate implementation of this rule.

However, while I remain fully supportive of the rule, I am hesitant regarding the set aside for waste coal. I agree that we cannot leave waste coal to remain in piles and enable environmentally dangerous circumstances but I do believe there are alternatives to burning waste coal that should be explored, including remediation and redevelopment of the site. Further, it is my understanding that the Pennsylvania specific version of RGGI there are a number of loopholes that allow low-producing oil and gas wells to avoid participation. These low producing oil and gas wells account for more than half of the methane pollution and it is my hope that in the final version of RGGI, we are able to correct this oversight and ensure that when Pennsylvania enacts this regional compact, it produces the results we have witnessed in other states.

We need to invest in our Commonwealth's land and future, not further exacerbate the very problem RGGI is trying to address.

I thank the IRRRC for the opportunity to submit public comment in support of this rule 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 "Katie Muth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Muth".

Senator Katie Muth, SD44