



Senate of Pennsylvania

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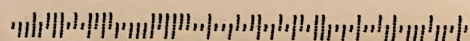
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**Senate of Pennsylvania**

December 3, 2020

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Environmental Quality Board  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
P. O. Box 8477  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Re: Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559))

Dear Members:

I am writing to provide these comments in support of Pennsylvania joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) as part of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's public comment period.

Scientific consensus and observable experience clearly demonstrate that our state and nation are in the midst of a climate crisis, which threatens the environmental integrity of our Commonwealth and the health and safety of our citizens. The severity of recent natural events, including wildfires in the Western United States and flooding as result of heavy rains associated with the remnants of Hurricane Isaias in my own district (District 11, Berks County), bring this into focus. We have an obligation and an opportunity to take action now to do our part to help address this climate crisis by reducing the amount of greenhouse gases we produce. Joining RGGI can help us achieve this imperative.

Over the past ten plus years, the coalition of "red-led" and "blue-led" states that have participated in RGGI have decreased carbon pollution by 47%, which is better than the rest of the country by 90%. RGGI has proven to be the most successful state-generated initiative addressing greenhouse gases.

Pennsylvania ranks number four in emission of greenhouse gases among the fifty states. The actions we take, or do not take, with regard to greenhouse gases, impact beyond our borders because, as we know, pollution does not stop and start at the Mason-Dixon Line, or at the Delaware River in the East or where the Ohio Turnpike begins in the West. It is my understanding that if Pennsylvania participates in RGGI our Commonwealth's carbon emissions would be diminished by an astounding 188 million tons by 2030. That is equivalent to removing 36 million cars from our roadways. Moreover, it multiplies the cumulative regional environmental of RGGI by a significant factor.



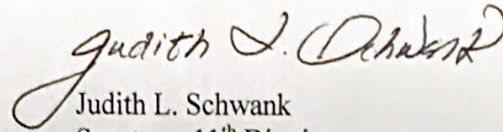
It is fact that air pollution has serious deleterious impacts on human health—from respiratory ailments to heart conditions to premature deaths. Diminishing emissions from power plants will reduce air pollution and provide tremendous health benefits. Studies show that Pennsylvania joining RGGI could reduce the prevalence of these adverse health impacts across the board, including avoiding 30,000 hospital visits for respiratory-related illnesses.

RGGI also offers the potential and promise of significant economic benefits. Specifically, projections indicate that the initiative could produce 27,000 new jobs generating approximately \$2 billion in new economic activity in the Commonwealth. These measures when paired with efforts to enhance and increase our use of renewable energy sources undoubtedly will produce even more positive economic benefits for the residents of Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania constitution guarantees Pennsylvanians “a right to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of natural, scenic, historic, esthetic values of the environment.” We as elected and appointed officials have an obligation to protect these rights. The enactment of prudent and proven policies, like RGGI, will allow us to better fulfill this responsibility.

I therefore respectfully urge you to approve the plan for Pennsylvania to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Judith L. Schwank  
Senator—11<sup>th</sup> District

JLS/TG