



Stephen Hoffman

From: ecomment@pa.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 3, 2021 12:57 PM
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Cc: c-jflanagan@pa.gov
Subject: Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

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The enclosed comment was received as part of the following testimony:

Testimony name: Public Hearing 7 (9am) - #7-559
Testimony date: 12/11/2020 12:00:00 AM
Testimony location: WebEx

Re: eComment System

The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559).

Commenter Information:

Alex Lola
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1321 Mifflin St
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Comments entered:

Hi, my name is Alex Lola, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of RGGI today. I'm doing so as a private and very concerned resident of Pennsylvania. I live in South Philadelphia, and I'm here to voice my support for RGGI because I see my community hurting. With some of the poorest and most neglected communities in the commonwealth, Philadelphians are already suffering from the impacts of climate change and the consequences they bring. Philadelphia was ranked last year as the 4th "Asthma capital" of the country, meaning our poor air quality paired with limited access to adequate, affordable healthcare makes us the 4th worst city to live in when it comes to asthma risks. I shouldn't have to say this, but that is really bad. There shouldn't even be a list of asthma capitals, and we certainly shouldn't be on it. Additionally, neighborhoods in South and North Philly are up to 20 degrees hotter in the throws of summer than our suburban counterparts, due to the urban heat island effect, and have significantly less access to air conditioning in homes and public spaces. For our most vulnerable residents, those degrees become the difference between life and death. Increased heat is also tied to increased

domestic and community violence, another issue that takes the lives of hundreds in our city each year. And it's only getting hotter. It's also getting wetter. Philly has some of the oldest and most dilapidated housing stock in our region, meaning the increased storm frequency and severity we're already experiencing puts even more of our neighbors at risk of homelessness and grave health issues.

I say all of this not because they're secrets or little known facts, but because they're but a few of the very real ways that climate change is already hurting my city each and every day. I say all of this because it's easy to slip into a rhetoric that talks about future climate impacts, which allows us to kick this insidious can further and further down the road. But people in this commonwealth are hurting today, here and now, because of local, national, and global inaction on the growing climate crisis. But here we are, faced with an initiative, an opportunity, to begin righting many of our wrongs.

RGGI is no silver bullet to our warming climate, nor centuries of racism, colonialism, and unbridled development and environmental degradation that got us here. But it is a pretty big step in recovery, and one that we cannot overlook. In the next ten years, RGGI can enable us to reduce over 100,000 tons of nitrogen oxide pollution, and nearly 70,000 tons of sulfur dioxide pollution, both pervasive and harmful pollutants that can trigger asthma attacks and other respiratory ailments. Reducing this pollution will help protect the health of vulnerable Pennsylvanians across the state. And that's not all. ALL of our neighboring states, many of whom decided long ago to take the step we're only just considering today, have cut their carbon emissions by nearly half. And if PA joins the program, we could cut our carbon emissions by 188 MILLION tons by 2030. That will by no means cool our climate, but it is nothing to scoff at in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and slowing our increasingly warm, and thus perilous, climate.

Take a second and imagine what that all means. Hundreds of fewer premature deaths, tens of thousands of fewer hospital visits, and missed days of school and work. That's the reality for so many, but we have the opportunity now to change course. To keep someone's loved one out of the ER, to keep your childrens' friends from keeling over on the playground in need of an inhaler. And to help reduce the pollution that's driving the climate crisis. We can start making that cleaner, healthier reality, our reality by joining RGGI, AND ALSO generate a lot of income and good paying jobs for our state. That income can go a long way in further mitigating many of the issues I mentioned earlier, through energy efficiency and clean energy. That income can also help those in our most vulnerable communities survive, if not prosper, when paired with reduced climate stressors. After centuries of neglect, don't they deserve at least that much? Pennsylvania cannot forgo this opportunity, we must join RGGI and take steps to reduce our pollution and emissions now -- there's too much at stake for too many of us.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

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