



Testimony for CO₂ Budget Trading Program Regulation
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My name is Dr. Liz Lowenthal. I live in Narberth, PA and I work in Philadelphia. I am the mother of two school-aged girls. Professionally, I work as both a pediatrician and an epidemiologist focused on child health. Both as a mother and as professional focused on the health of children, I recognize that there is little that is of more importance to future generations than committing to decreasing environmental pollution and reversing climate change. That is why I have chosen to take time out of my busy schedule to testify today.

I am proud to be a Pennsylvanian. So, it pains me to know that we are one of the largest climate polluters in the country. There is so much that I could say about the impacts of pollution and climate change on the lives of my pediatric patients, on the lives of my family and friends, and on my own life. I care for patients with asthma and other illnesses that are caused by or exacerbated by air pollution. I have loved ones whose lives have been upended by natural disasters. But, in preparing these remarks, I found that my mind kept returning to a conversation that I had with my daughters on a recent walk through our neighborhood.

It was late November, but it felt like May or June. We were wearing shorts and tee shirts. The temperature was nearly 70 degrees. Being isolated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been thankful for days when we can be outside. On this particular day, we were initially cheered further by beautiful cherry tree blossoms in our neighborhood. The trees in bloom are ones that we know in the past have only bloomed in spring. We also noticed that daffodil greens are coming up in our yard and the yards of many of our neighbors. Our summer yarrow flowers are oddly still in bloom. My 10 year old was full of questions: "Will the flowers bloom in spring if they start blooming now?" "Do you think the trees will die if they get too confused about the seasons?" My 14 year old, however, after initial excitement about the unexpected beauty on our walk soon became sullen. I will paraphrase what she said to me. She said: "You know, so much has changed just in my lifetime that I expect most of this won't be around for me to look at with my kids."

(pause)

Think about that for a moment. It is absolutely true that we've seen visible signs of climate change during my children's short lives. My mother couldn't have said that about her childhood and I couldn't have said that about mine. When my teen states sadly that she expects dramatic worsening of the environment in the next few decades, I pray that she is wrong. But, I fear that she could be right. And if she is right, it will be our fault. We have the power to make our air and our water cleaner. We have the power to slow climate change. As a pediatrician, I try to treat each of my patients with what evidence suggests is going to give them the best chance to thrive. Between 2008 and 2018, carbon pollution decreased by 47% in participating RGGI states, outpacing the rest of the country by 90%. We could call the RGGI prescription "evidence based medicine for the environment." This is what Pennsylvania needs to prescribe today. By joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative we will be taking an important step towards improving the world that we leave our children. Thank you for listening.