



January 4, 2021

Testimony Against Pennsylvania joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

First, I'd like to say that I believe in clean air, water, and environment. Worldwide, only people that have the economic means, those who are well off, can afford to care about and pay to clean up their environment. Contrary to what many believe, nearly everywhere in the United States, including Pennsylvania, the air, water, and environment are cleaner than they were 20 years ago. This is not the case in much of the rest of the world.

The major stated motivation for joining RGGI and taxing fossil fuel generated electricity are the present and future negative impacts on PA caused by manmade climate change. PA and the earth's climate have always been changing. The earth and PA have been on a long-term warming trend since the Little Ice Age ended sometime about 1750.

All energy sources have positive and negative tradeoffs. Right now, there are only wind, solar, hydro, and nuclear power as replacements for fossil fuels. Fossil fuels supply 80% of all energy used.

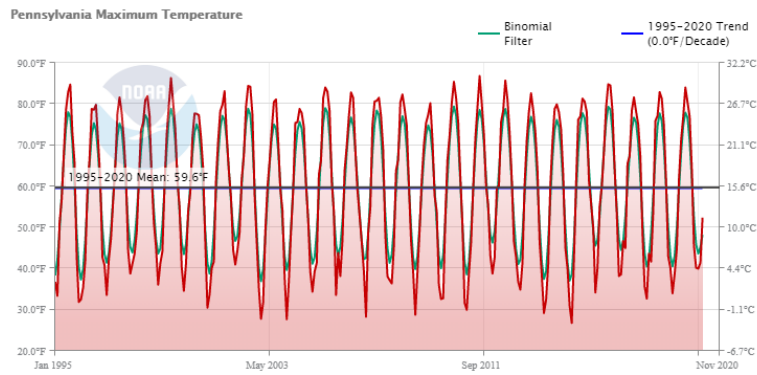
Each energy option requires mining of minerals, manufacturing, cement for construction, transportation, and other investments. The mining requirements particularly for industrial and car batteries, wind towers and solar panels are huge. They will require mining to expand by at least 10-20 times over or even more in the near term. Replacing coal and natural gas plants will require 10's of thousands of acres of wind and solar installations that come with their own tradeoffs.

[China burns 4.6 of the 8.5 billion tons](#) of coal burned every year for energy China produces 30% of the world's manmade CO₂, double the United States emissions. China has promised in the Paris Accord to increase their CO₂ until it peaks in 2030 and will unbelievably, somehow reach net zero, just thirty years later. Even though they get nearly 60% of all their energy, not just electricity, from coal. Beside the US, the other top three CO₂ emitting nations, India, Russia, and Brazil all have no overall CO₂ reduction goals at all. They are all increasing their CO₂ output.

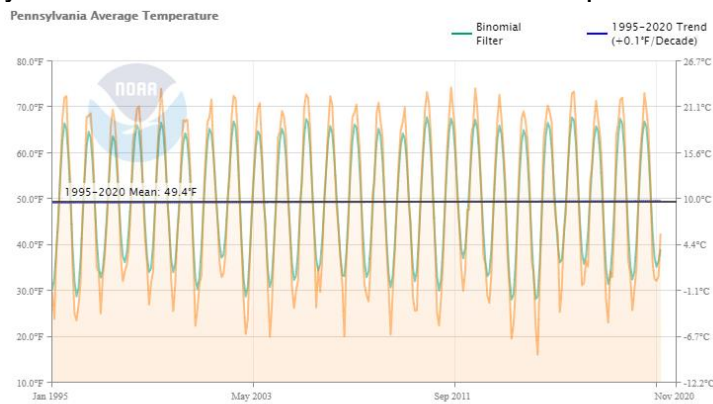
The present warming trend began long before man increased atmospheric CO₂ through the burning of natural gas, oil, and coal. All of which are in great abundance in PA. How much of this gradual warming is manmade by the release of CO₂ from burning fossil fuels and how much is natural is unprovable and unknowable.

NOAA temperature and precipitation records for Pennsylvania show:

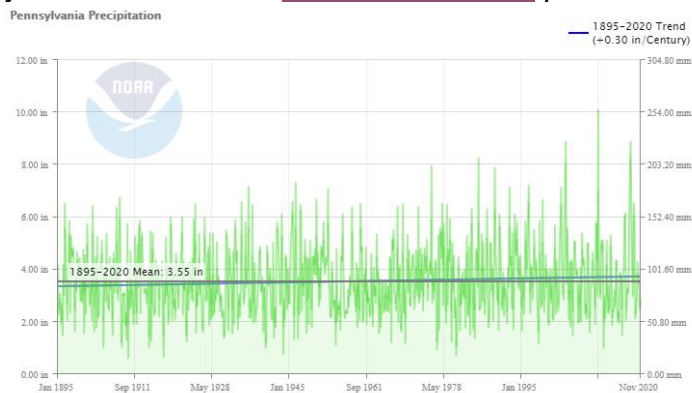
1. The maximum monthly temperature has not changed between 1995 and 2020. The mean maximum temperature of 59.6° has remained constant.



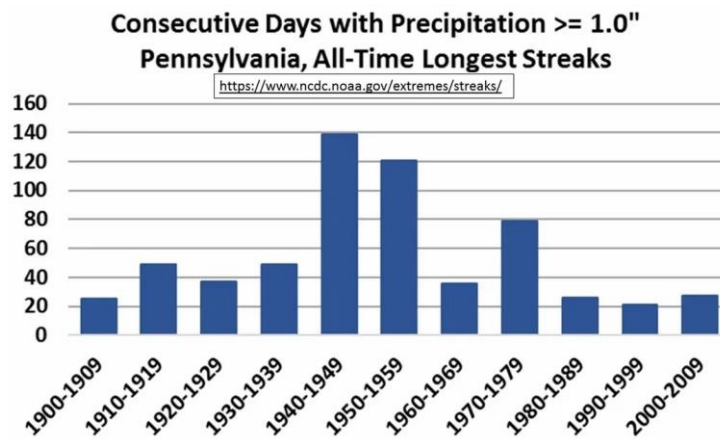
2. The average monthly temperature has increased just only 0.25° over the 25 years or 0.1° a decade. With a mean temperature of 49.4°.



3. Over the last 100 years the warm months of spring/summer have warmed just 0.7° and winters have warmed a whopping 2.2°.
4. Precipitation has increased about a third of an inch a month in the last 100 years with mean of about 3.55 inches per month.



- The flooding of the Susquehanna in 2018 was mentioned as another reason. However, the 2018 flood ranks just 31st on the list of greatest floods at Harrisburg — and only a bit more than half the record set by Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972. Also, the 1940's and 1950's had far more consecutive days with rain exceeding 1 inch that the last 2 decades. And this was before CO2 increased appreciably since 1950. See Graph.



The combination of warmer winters, more CO2 and more rainfall has been particularly good for food crops and agriculture in PA. Another important economic output of the state.

[2019 was one of the best](#) years for corn, soybeans, and wheat yields (the amount grown per acre). 2020 was a [record year for winter wheat](#) yield and harvest, that [was described](#) as a perfect growing season. While 2018 was a poor year for crops because of the excess rain, many of the preceding years harvests have been outstanding and getting better. The agriculture industry is benefiting from climate change, whether manmade or natural.

Another stated reason for taxing electricity is to reduce or eliminate CO2 from electric generation to positively impact global warming. Because of the belief that CO2 is the primary control knob of the climate. If this is true, joining RGGI and even realizing the most aggressive CO2 reductions will have little or no impact on our climate or atmospheric CO2 levels in the near or long term.

First, because PA electricity generation produces little of the world's CO2. Second, right now [China is building 180 of the at least 360 coal electric plants under construction worldwide](#). And nearly all nations on earth are increasing, not decreasing their CO2 emissions. The United States and PA, because of reasonably priced natural gas have reduced our emissions without resorting to an electricity tax.

Fossil fuels provide 80% of the world's energy. It provides the energy used to plant, harvest, process and bring food from field to table. It allows each of us, if we chose to,

to get in a car or fly on an airplane. More people are better off today than 50 or 100 years ago because of fossil fuels. They will not be able to be replaced easily or cheaply.

We need to understand this fact. Wind and solar, because they are intermittent, just don't provide enough energy at night or when the wind doesn't blow. And there are no industrial batteries to store enough energy to keep Philadelphia and other cities powered when wind and solar aren't providing energy generation. This is one of the great technology barriers that we don't have an answer for.

For these reasons, I urge you to reject the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Don't be Europe. Don't send jobs to other states and nations. Don't export your emissions. Don't increase your cost of electricity unnecessarily because it disproportionately hurts poor and minority communities the most. And joining RGGI will do little in the real world beyond helping some people feel good.

If you do decide to join RGGI, particularly considering a hoped for Covid-19 recovery. Put off taxing electricity until more stable economic times. Increasing electricity costs will have a detrimental effect on the post-Covid-19 recovery and job creation.

There is no imminent climate disaster for Pennsylvanians that requires this expensive action.

Sincerely,

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