



Good morning. My name is John Vanco. I live in the Commonwealth's only Great Lakes city, beautiful Erie, PA. I'm speaking on behalf of ReLeaf, a large-scale tree planting program sponsored by LEAF, the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park in Erie. For several years, I've been very moved by comments from teachers about their students' fears of the future, and I hear the same fears talking to young people who fully understand that the climate is changing rapidly and that we are causing it, but despite the frantic warnings of science, society is definitely not doing enough about it. It's inspired me to advocate for ReLeaf, which aims to engage as many people as possible in planting trees—one for every resident of Erie county, some 275,000 people, because planting trees is something that everyone, young and old, can participate in, even in a pandemic, to directly address the impacts of Climate Change.

But planting trees alone is not going to save the Earth as we know it. We **MUST** stop pumping carbon into the atmosphere. We have to **END** the extraction and combustion of fossil fuels. Critics claim that it's impossible, it's too fast, and it's going to cause social disruption (as though wildfires, hurricanes, floods and heat waves aren't disruptive). Sure, it's a large change, but by no means unprecedented, nor uniquely difficult.

Compare our situation to that in the large cities across America and Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These electrified and increasingly modernized urban areas depended for their transportation on horses—horses that indiscriminately distributed thousands of tons of manure in city streets, a threat to both public health and civilized living standards. New York City alone had well over 100,000 horses on the street every day. A horse had a working

life of 3 years. When a horse died, the carcass was abandoned on the street, because it was easier to cut up after it had rotted.

Workers in the coal, oil, and gas businesses today are in the same difficult position as the thousands of crossing sweepers and stablehands and buggy whip makers, the manure and carcass collectors and the farmers who grew literally millions of acres of hay and oats to support the transportation system. This crisis was widely acknowledged by 1895 and it seemed hopeless. But by 1912, the problem was essentially resolved by a massive changeover to electric trolleys and gas-powered automobiles. They effected this huge change in less than two decades. While all those workers lost their jobs, there was no social collapse, because even more new jobs were created. Today we are changing our transportation system again, and again, it's happening very quickly.

We MUST address Climate Change just as aggressively as cities addressed the horse manure crisis. Approaches like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative are already proven to work. RGGI provides many more jobs than it displaces. Anyone concerned about employment in the Commonwealth should look at the statistics for states that are already participating in RGGI. In fact, anyone concerned about employment should look at the current numbers. According to DEP statistics for 2019, there were just over 5,000 people employed in energy production from coal, oil, and natural gas in Pennsylvania. At the same time, there were almost 10,000 people employed in solar, wind, and other renewable forms of energy generation. That's today—almost TWICE as many people employed in alternatives as in fossil fuels today! Estimates are that over the next decade, RGGI will create over 27,000 jobs in Pennsylvania—that's five times the current employment in fossil fuel extraction.

The Commonwealth already suffers from a terrible legacy of fossil fuel pollution, with thousands of abandoned gas and oil wells, acres devastated by mining and coal ash dumps. Our air and our water are gummed up with pollution from fossil fuel combustion. Our forests and waterways are still afflicted by acid rain. Improvements to public health alone will save millions of dollars, as well as relieving untold suffering. RGGI is not perfect, and I urge you to consider the many thoughtful comments for its improvement, but it is a proven, non-partisan, practical, commonsense means of bringing about the change in power generation that we so desperately need. If they could do it in 1895, we can do it TODAY.

Thank you.

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