



## Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Virtual Public Hearing PA DEP

On the proposed regulation for the CO<sub>2</sub> Budget Trading Program.  
Afternoon Session - December 10, 2020

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I am speaking on behalf of the Eco Justice Collaborative (EJC) of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Quakers.

The Eco Justice Collaborative (EJC) is committed to the idea that Peace, Justice, and an Earth Restored are integral concepts. When the earth is exploited, so are all its creatures. When there is war, the earth and its people suffer. As climate change worsens, wars are initiated, people are displaced, hunger and sickness rise, and climate disruptions are multiplied and made more intense.

All will suffer from climate change, but the most vulnerable populations will face certain calamity much earlier. Environmental racism has already harmed communities of color. Continued exploitation of the earth's resources, especially fossil fuels, has already caused mass extinctions and put life as we know it at risk. Conflicts due to rising sea levels, food insecurity, water scarcity, and mass migrations are already causing horrific injustice and threatening world peace. For these reasons, the Eco Justice Collaborative believes that mitigating the climate crisis is a moral and faith imperative.

EJC trusts the assertion of the climate scientists that we must cut carbon emissions by 50% in ten years, and then to net-zero by 2050. We know that if we do not meet or exceed this goal, humanity will experience a global climate catastrophe of incalculable severity before the end of the century.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a crucial mitigation tool and we celebrate the success of RGGI in the ten states where it is in place, and where it is cutting climate pollution by a third and raising nearly \$3 billion to invest in clean energy. I hope Pennsylvania can tap into this record of success. If so, experts project that Pennsylvania can cut carbon pollution by more than 180 million tons, while creating more than 27,000 new jobs and adding nearly \$2 billion to the state's economy. We strongly support the adoption of a carbon market in Pennsylvania and endorse Governor Wolf's decision to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the nation's oldest carbon market. If we adopt the proposed regulations, our carbon market has the potential to be extremely beneficial to all Pennsylvanians. Pennsylvania's carbon market can:

- **Lower greenhouse gas emissions:** significantly and steadily, reducing air pollution statewide and helping to mitigate climate change

- **Create jobs statewide:** DEP estimates that 27,000 net new jobs will be created statewide by 2030. Job creation is critical as unemployment now stands above 13% in PA.
- **Grow the economy statewide:** Gross state product will increase by at least \$1.9 Billion by 2030. Economic recovery from the pandemic is urgent. Given the dramatic reduction in tax revenues, we must grow the economy in a sustainable way that does not depend on public funding.
- **Improve public health:** RGGI will save at least 639 lives and provide \$6.3 billion in improvements to the health of Pennsylvanians by 2030, by reducing the severity of asthma, other respiratory disease, heart disease and many other health problems caused and exacerbated by air pollution and climate change.
- **Lower energy costs** and save the average Pennsylvanian money through the extensive investment in energy efficiency statewide.

RGGI harnesses market forces to reduce carbon emissions as cost effectively as possible. Its cap and invest structure and the anticipated investment of auction allowance proceeds in energy efficiency, renewable energy, clean transportation, carbon sequestration and other carbon mitigation efforts will enable Pennsylvania to accomplish a number of additional goals:

1. It will ensure that we meet the target of lowering emissions by at least 3% each year.
2. PA will do so at the lowest possible price. Carbon markets have been shown to reduce energy prices in RGGI states more significantly than in non-RGGI states.
3. Carbon sequestration in soil and the expansion of solar energy will help to save family farms by providing new cash crops.
4. PA will be able to relieve some of the energy burden on low and low moderate income households by improving the energy efficiency of homes statewide.
5. PA will be able to support a just transition for workers in fossil fuel industries.

On a personal note, I have been an advocate for environmental sustainability for fifty years. During the last thirty years, my concern has shifted to the existential urgency of the climate crisis and attendant climate justice. Pennsylvania became my home as an adult and I love this beautiful state and its wonderful people. However, I was saddened to learn, early in my residence here that Pennsylvania, a major exporter and emitter of greenhouse gases, is responsible for 1% of global emissions. Pennsylvania is thus, a major offender in the climate change story. RGGI can be a crucial tool for changing that story.