



Proposed Rulemaking: CO₂ Budget Trading Program

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**The Moral and Ethical Case for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's
Participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)**

Good morning. My name is William Cozzens. I live in Philadelphia and am a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). I am speaking today on behalf of Germantown Friends Meeting in Philadelphia, in support of the proposed rulemaking.

Quakers believe that there is "that of God" in every human being and therefore it is fundamental that people be treated equitably and with justice. How does a concern for equity and justice apply to the Commonwealth joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)? Scientists have concluded that, on a global basis, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced very substantially by 2030 and eliminated completely by 2050 to keep global temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius. Allowing temperatures to go above that level will result in catastrophic consequences for humanity and for the natural world.

Three ethical principles lead me to conclude that the Commonwealth has a responsibility to move quickly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that RGGI is a good first step in that process.

First, What's Our Fair Share? Historically the United States has emitted more greenhouse gases than any other country. Currently we are second only to China which has four times the population of the United States. So, we still emit more greenhouse cases per person than any major country. Since we have been and are the biggest contributor to the problem, fairness dictates that we should bear the greatest responsibility for cleaning it up. Already real people are suffering and dying due to our fossil fuel use, people who have made virtually no contribution to the atmosphere's skyrocketing greenhouse gas concentrations. And these human impacts will only get worse with time. **Principle 1. Fairness demands that the US (and Pennsylvania!) reduce our greenhouse gases proportionately to our significant contribution to the problem.**

Second, Consider Climate Justice at Home. The burdens of fossil fuel use and climate change hit some people in Pennsylvania and across the US much more heavily than others. Asthma and other respiratory ailments are made worse by burning fossil fuels. Higher summer temperatures and heat waves threaten populations least able to afford air conditioning. Droughts and storms impact agricultural production and increase the cost of food, having a bigger impact on the nutrition and health of poor people. Climate change is an inequality multiplier, making worse the challenges facing the poor in our society. **Principle 2. Whatever we do must include a just transition that benefits those at the bottom of our economy and those likely to be displaced by changes in the energy economy.**

Third, Consider Intergenerational Justice. What about our children and grandchildren? American society has benefitted from economic growth and prosperity in major part due to abundant and reasonably priced energy. Energy has been cheap because energy producers have not had to cover the bad effects burning that fuel is having on the environment, including the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere. That bill is now coming due and will hit future generations much more heavily. Our grandchildren and their children will pay the price for our energy profligacy and our failure to pay the true cost of the energy we consumed. **Principle 3. We should make the effort now, even if it means incurring costs, to avoid saddling future generations with much higher costs and severe environmental degradation.**

In conclusion . . . The Commonwealth has been a major contributor to the energy economy of the United States: coal, oil, and natural gas. We have contributed more than our share to pollution and climate change. Remember the parent's admonition to their child: "You made a mess, so you need to clean it up!"

While the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative does not address the entire problem of greenhouse gases, our participation would be a significant step in addressing Pennsylvania's moral and ethical responsibility to reduce its greenhouse gas output: supporting global fairness, climate justice at home, and justice for generations of Pennsylvanians yet to come.

Thank you for your time and attention.