



## Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of DEP's proposed RGGI rule.

Pennsylvanians know all too well that climate change is real and that it's happening already in our Commonwealth. In Philadelphia County alone, we've experienced record heat days,<sup>1</sup> we had 36 tornado warnings last year,<sup>2</sup> and much of South Philadelphia (including the Philadelphia International Airport) is expected to be underwater within 30 years.<sup>3</sup> In part, because of these grim realities, Pennsylvanians overwhelmingly support joining RGGI. 79% of Pennsylvanians support placing a limit on carbon pollution from power plants<sup>4</sup> and more than 7 in 10 Pennsylvania voters support the state's participation in RGGI.<sup>5</sup> I agree.

The most important thing that I want to impart to the Board today, is that joining RGGI and transitioning our power plants to cleaner energy sources is not a sacrifice, but a massive *opportunity*. RGGI is one of many tools that Pennsylvania needs to put into place to open up opportunities in sustainability and transition Pennsylvania's economy to a clean energy future.

My family has lived in Pennsylvania for generations. A child of Irish immigrants, my grandmother moved from Pottsville to Philadelphia during the Great Depression. Previously coal miners and repair mechanics, my family sought new opportunities in the factories that were making Philadelphia a hub for manufacturing during World War II. My family's move to Philadelphia paralleled shifts underway in Pennsylvania, and much of the country, as the economy moved from coal and natural resource extraction in rural areas, to manufacturing and services in urban areas.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fox29.com/news/julys-21-days-of-temps-90-degrees-or-above-ties-philadelphia-record>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.phillymag.com/news/2020/12/03/philly-weather-severe-climate-change-fall/>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.greenbiz.com/article/philadelphia-international-airport-grapples-climate-change-and-sea-level-rise>

<sup>4</sup>

[https://www.edfaction.org/sites/edactionfund.org/files/pa\\_carbon\\_limits\\_survey\\_findings\\_memo\\_-\\_pp\\_final.pdf](https://www.edfaction.org/sites/edactionfund.org/files/pa_carbon_limits_survey_findings_memo_-_pp_final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://climatenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Pennsylvania-Climate-Change-Poll-Toplines.pdf>

Similar to my Grandmom during the Great Depression, I too am seeing a profound economic transition underway today in Pennsylvania. After graduating college, I lived in Massachusetts where I worked in the solar industry. I worked for a wholesale equipment supplier that distributed solar panels and other clean energy technologies to local, mom & pop solar installers who were helping transition their neighbors to a clean energy future, house by house, and project by project. After a few years, I moved back home to Pennsylvania where I wanted to use what I had learned about the clean energy business, and apply it in our state to help transition my neighbors to clean energy, and to help prepare my communities for climate change.

I worked for two years in city government, here in Philadelphia, helping run solar energy programs that encouraged homeowners to install rooftop solar systems. This included developing financing models to help make solar more affordable for low and moderate income households.

I am now a law student at Temple Law, and I hope to use my legal education one day to help businesses adapt to climate change, and invest in a sustainable, clean energy future here in Pennsylvania.

Just like my Grandmom experienced back in the Great Depression, so too is Pennsylvania's economy undergoing another, fundamental transition. Today's transition is moving away from unsustainable energy sources, to a clean energy economy that works for everyone, including future generations of Pennsylvanians yet to come.

Joining RGGI is a critically important step our government can take to combat climate change. RGGI has been a big success in the 10 states where it's already in place, cutting climate pollution by a third and raising nearly \$3 billion dollars to invest in energy efficiency and clean energy projects.<sup>6</sup> Carbon emissions from power plants in RGGI states have fallen by 47%, outpacing the rest of the country by 90%.<sup>7</sup> According to the DEP's own findings, joining RGGI will lead to a net increase of more than 27,000 jobs and add \$1.9 billion dollars to Pennsylvania's economy.<sup>8</sup>

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<https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/01/power-plant-emissions-down-47-percent-under-the-regional-greenhouse-gas-initiative/#:~:text=The%20Acadia%20report%20also%20says,%2C%20which%20grew%20by%2031%25.>

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<https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/01/power-plant-emissions-down-47-percent-under-the-regional-greenhouse-gas-initiative/#:~:text=The%20Acadia%20report%20also%20says,%2C%20which%20grew%20by%2031%25.>

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<http://blogs.edf.org/climate411/2020/11/09/pennsylvanians-make-your-voice-heard-on-a-major-climate-rulemaking/#:~:text=Generating%20economic%20gains%3A%20Participation%20in,a%20cleaner%20and%20healthier%20economy.>

The fastest growing job in America today is wind turbine technicians.<sup>9</sup> The third fastest growing job is solar installer.<sup>10</sup> Today in Pennsylvania, there are more clean energy jobs, than there are jobs in fossil fuels.<sup>11</sup> I've seen these trends first hand, and I can see how these trends will continue to make positive impacts on Pennsylvania's economy and in Pennsylvania's communities.

Not only is RGGI good for Pennsylvania, it is within DEP's power and authority to implement RGGI, and the DEP arguably has a duty to implement RGGI under § 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.<sup>12</sup> Under the Environmental Rights Amendment, all levels of Pennsylvania government have a duty to conserve and maintain the People's right to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the natural, scenic, and historic values of the environment, which are the common property of all Pennsylvanians, including generations yet to come.<sup>13</sup>

I strongly support joining RGGI, along with the majority of Pennsylvanians, and I urge the DEP to pass the necessary regulations to implement RGGI in our Commonwealth. I support setting a stringent cap and aggressive reduction targets that will ensure Pennsylvania becomes a leader, and not a laggard, among other Northeast states in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Just as my Grandmom and myself have been able to enjoy Pennsylvania's clean air and pure water, joining RGGI will help ensure that future Pennsylvanians will get to enjoy these things too. RGGI is a giant step in the right direction in preparing Pennsylvania for a changing climate, and transitioning our economy to a cleaner energy future.

Thank you.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm>

<sup>11</sup>

[https://e2.org/releases/report-clean-energy-employed-94000-in-pa-before-pandemic-50k-more-than-fossil-fuels/#:~:text=Notwithstanding%2C%20clean%20energy%20employed%20more,in%20fossil%20fuels%20\(44%2C000\).](https://e2.org/releases/report-clean-energy-employed-94000-in-pa-before-pandemic-50k-more-than-fossil-fuels/#:~:text=Notwithstanding%2C%20clean%20energy%20employed%20more,in%20fossil%20fuels%20(44%2C000).)

<sup>12</sup> *Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation. v. Commonwealth*, 161 A.3d 911, 931, n. 23, 932 (Pa. 2017).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/CT/HTM/00/00.001..HTM>