

## CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation



Good evening, Everyone. My name is Charmaine Butler. I am a resident of Upper Darby Township, Pennsylvania. I am a wife, a mother of two adult children, and a grandmother of two grandchildren, ages 12 and 8. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you at today's Carbon Dioxide Budget Trading Program Regulation. My testimony is in further support as to why the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ("**Pennsylvania**") should join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ("**RGGI**").

Here's what we know, the climate is changing in **Pennsylvania** and across the United States because of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels like coal, natural gas, and oil. Temperatures in **Pennsylvania** are projected to increase by 5.4 degrees by 2050. Power outages from extreme storms across Pennsylvania hit a record high in 2019, disrupting electricity service for nearly 2 million families and businesses.

While we wait for **Pennsylvania** to make its decision to join **RGGI** or not, please let us take a moment to reimagine **RGGI** in Pennsylvania.

I cannot talk about **RGGI** until I bring your attention to environmental racism. Now, I know the topic of racism may make

some of you uncomfortable, so hopefully after my testimony you will be at ease. Environmental racism is not your problem but America's problem. Consequently, here's where the lines start to blur when we do not view the connection between racism and environmental racism.

Environmental racism refers to the way in which minority group neighborhoods (populated primarily by people of color and members of low socioeconomic groups) are burdened with a disproportionate number of hazards, including toxic waste facilities, garbage dumps, and other sources of environmental pollution and foul odors that lower the quality of life.

The statistics on environmental racism are shocking. Robert Bullard ("**Bullard**"), a sociologist, conducted a 25 year comparative study about African Americans' lives: environmentally unsound housing, schools with asbestos problems, facilities and playgrounds with lead paint and "race to be more important than socioeconomic status in predicting the location of the nation's commercial hazardous waste facilities" (Bullard, et al. 2007). Sociologists with the project are

examining how environmental racism is addressed in the long-term cleanup of the environmental disasters caused by Hurricane Katrina.

**RGGI** has proven to be a big success in 10 other states by cutting climate pollution by a third and raising nearly \$3 billion to invest in clean energy and other purposes. Investments in energy efficiency, from revenue created by **RGGI**, can reduce electric bills. In the states already participating in **RGGI**, investments under the program have helped save consumers more than a billion dollars on their energy bills thus far.

That is why **Pennsylvania** must plan for the transition that is already happening, and to prepare **Pennsylvania's** workers for the energy jobs of the future.

A portion of the proceeds could be used to help workers and communities who will be affected by the ongoing and inevitable transition of the energy market away from coal to natural gas and renewables.

If Pennsylvania decides to join **RGGI**, it will provide multiple benefits to the citizens of **Pennsylvania**. Most importantly, the reduction in carbon pollution would save lives and improve overall

health. Analysis conducted for **DEP** estimates that **Pennsylvania's** carbon pollution will be cut by 21% or 180 million tons, from 2022 to 2030 if participation in **RGGI** moves forward. That is equal to taking more than 4 million cars off the road.

The resulting health benefits will include fewer heat related deaths, fewer cases of bronchitis, fewer asthma attacks, reduction in insect related illness, and improved cardiovascular health. It is expected to generate \$6.3 billion in health care savings and 30,000 fewer hospital visits for respiratory illnesses like asthma among children and adults.

Now, I would like to refresh your memory about a devastating and one of the worst tropical storms, so far, that recently hit Pennsylvania. In August 2020, Upper Darby, Lansdowne, and Chester were shattered by tropical storm "Isiasa," which created a tsunami in the Darby Creek and caused the the following damage:

More than 400,000 people were reported without power at one point. A beverage business owner in Delaware County stated that his business lost an estimated \$600,000; In Southwest Philadelphia, 160 people were still not in their homes after their neighborhood flooded, and the list of damages goes on.

However, I am pleased to report that Mayor Barbarann Keffer recently announced that Upper Darby, Chadds Ford Township, and Havertown of Delaware County have been accepted into the Local Climate Action Program (“**LCAP**”). According to the **DEP**, the **LCAP** will help local municipalities on how to measure local greenhouse gas emissions, assess local climate-related vulnerabilities, and develop plans to reduce emissions and manage climate change impacts in their communities. That’s good news.

Finally, we are seeing the effects of climate change locally, nationally, and globally. Let’s do the right thing by making sure that **RGGI** passes and is equitable for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.