



Testimony for RGGI hearing

Thank you to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for providing this opportunity for citizens, businesses and organizations to testify in support of the CO2 Budget Trading Program proposal.

My name is Geoffrey Selling. I am a retired science teacher, a Pennsylvania Master Watershed Steward and a weekly volunteer at Curtis Arboretum assisting with the preservation and maintenance of the riparian buffer on Rock Creek there. I am resident of Philadelphia, though most of my volunteer work takes place in Montgomery County.

Reacting to the recently released scientific evidence that this year will be the hottest on record, as marine heat waves swelled over 80% of the world's oceans and triple digit heat invaded Siberia, one of the planet's coldest places, Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres recently said, QUOTE "To put it simply, the state of the planet is broken.....humanity is waging war on nature. This is suicidal. Nature always strikes back, and it is already doing so with growing force and fury." UNQUOTE

Here in Pennsylvania, our watersheds are feeling that force and fury. As someone who now works regularly within those aquatic ecosystems, I wish to share some of the impacts that I have seen and studied.

We are experiencing unprecedented numbers of high intensity storms which our storm water management systems are unprepared to handle. As a result, flooding events are now regular occurrences rather than rare instances. The flooding damages homes, roads and infrastructures like bridges. Trash, fertilizers and road salts pour into our streams damaging aquatic life, because we don't have the systems to slow and dissipate those volumes of water.

These high intensity run-off events also damage our streams directly by eroding the banks, uprooting precious trees and washing tremendous quantities of soil, silt and sand into the streams. Eventually, that silt blocks up streams, buries the habitat of stream-dwelling organisms and deprives them of oxygen and actually kills fish and aquatic insects that are the basis of our all-important food chains. The muddy water absorbs more sunlight and this raises stream temperatures, making streams uninhabitable for creatures like our own state fish, the brook trout. I see this damage on a weekly basis in Montgomery County where I volunteer and where almost every stream has been seriously impaired by these excessive and powerful storm events—storms that are directly correlated to rising global temperatures.

We all know that water runs downhill and also moves underground. Our reliance on fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas has allowed all kinds of toxic chemicals to leach underground or flow directly into our already compromised streams. Much of Pennsylvania lives downstream from these mines and fracking sites and our aquatic systems and consequent health have been damaged by these pollutants.

We need to move away from fossil fuels. Our coal fired power plants are aging and most are at or beyond what is known as retirement age. Though natural gas may pollute a bit less than coal itself, natural gas production and use are still major causes of greenhouse gas emissions, that are damaging our air, water and climate. For the sake of our children, our grandchildren and beyond, not to mention our own generation, we need to move away from fossil fuels and towards a renewable and greener energy producing system. The DEP has projected that we stand to gain 27,000 jobs, a two billion dollar increase in our gross state product and a \$3.7 billion dollar increase in personal income by taking such steps.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is not a perfect solution but it is a major step that reorients our priorities and would set us on the road to a cleaner, greener and safer environment, and a more prosperous and sustainable state economy. I strongly urge the joining of the RGGI initiative.