



Hello, my name is Laura Murillo, I'm 37 years old, living in Glenside, PA, which is a suburb of Philadelphia. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today, in support of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative or (RGGI).

This testimony is mostly personal, those before me have graciously provided such wonderful statistics. I have several personal reasons to support this initiative, primary among them is that my oldest son Sean has asthma. Naturally, this makes me hyper-aware of air quality in our area. Now, there is no family history of asthma on either my side of my family or on the side of my husband, who is an immigrant from Ecuador. At the time of Sean's birth and early development, we lived in Philadelphia, which is home to several polluting industries, particularly the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery, the largest oil refinery on the East Coast. Given the lack of family history, I can't think of anything other than poor environmental air quality as the direct contributing factor to my son's asthma. I have witnessed how periods of poor air quality has caused a flareup requiring his inhaler, or worse, a trip to the ER. Case in point, as we are learning, the dramatic decrease in travel due to COVID-19 restrictions has rather dramatically decreased carbon emissions this year, and 2020 is the first year I can remember since his diagnosis 8 years ago where we didn't have an emergency room visit. I can only assume his improving asthma symptoms this year can be attributed to that decrease. If we can adopt RGGI and reduce emissions, my hope is that he can just be a kid and enjoy a normal childhood without worrying if he can breathe easy.

Pennsylvania is my home and my roots. Everyone in my family was born and raised in Pennsylvania, since my great-grandparents immigrated here. Those on my father's side settled in Johnstown, PA, which as you probably know was a powerhouse of a town during the industrial revolution. When he wasn't serving in WWII, my grandfather, worked in the Johnstown steel mills with Cambria Ironworks. His sons, my father and uncles went on to work there as well, and all have suffered either heart or lung issues, such as red lung, heart disease, heart attack and stroke, which killed both of my grandparents. More recently, my father suffered a stroke this year and is still recovering; although he had moved to Philadelphia decades ago, his work for nearly 25 years out of Frankford Terminal for SEPTA exposed him to exhaust fumes in the employee lounge which I remember as a child always smelled of exhaust. According to the American Heart Association, heart-related diseases have been directly related to air pollution thus I believe inhaling the fine steel particulates in the plants contributed to these conditions afflicting my family.

I have been learning about the Greenhouse effect and our ozone in my elementary education, and how carbon emissions damage our environment. Initially we called it Global warming, now it's Climate Change. Our terminology evolves, our understanding has deepened thanks to the scientific research, but although the picture is getting clearer, and the predictions more dire, not much has changed in our relationship with fossil fuels. Although I live paycheck to paycheck, I make sacrifices in other areas to purchase 100% renewable energy for my home, I buy organic, contribute to environmental groups, basically everything in my power with my limited income. If it were up to me, we would be here talking about moving to net-zero emissions, but RGGI is a wonderful first step.

Again, the statistics are all in favor of RGGI, the funds made available to the state can be used to transition us off unsustainable fossil fuels and toward a brighter future with sustainable, renewable energy. We truly have only to gain and nothing to lose by participating in RGGI. Thank you for listening, I yield any of my remaining time.