



Stephen Hoffman

From: ecomment@pa.gov
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 2:54 PM
To: Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; IRRC; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; regcomments@pa.gov; ntroutman@pasen.gov; timothy.collins@pasenate.com; gking@pahousegop.com; siversen@pahouse.net
Cc: c-jflanagan@pa.gov
Subject: Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

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The enclosed comment was received as part of the following testimony:

Testimony name: Public Hearing 8 (1pm) - #7-559
Testimony date: 12/11/2020 12:00:00 AM
Testimony location: WebEx

Re: eComment System

The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559).

Commenter Information:

Nora Elmarzouky
 Power Interfaith (nelmarzouky@powerinterfaith.org)
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 Philadelphia, PA 19143 US

Comments entered:

I am Nora Elmarzouky, a climate justice organizer and resident in Philadelphia. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the public hearings, which you've made more accessible than hearings in the past. Climate change is undeniable as we see dramatic weather shifts, hurricanes, typhoons, as well as here in Pennsylvania. We have faced extensive power outages due to extreme weather events, including that of Isaiah that hit southeastern PA earlier this year. My home Egypt faces rising sea levels due to melting ice caps is destroying agriculture along the northern Nile River basin. Scientific evidence, which I am sure you have heard much of the statistics, proves that the pollution that is emitted from the fossil fuel industry is directly correlated with climate change. We also know that the communities that face the brunt of both climate change and environmental degradation from fossil fuel burning power plants are Black, Brown, Indigenous, low-income, and other marginalized communities. This environmental degradation and harm causes decreased property values of the surrounding communities around these plants, compounding the issues faced. These polluting power plants are making our

communities sick. Recent studies show that communities surround power plants have had higher rates of COVID-19 largely often due to pre-existing health conditions. It doesn't have to be that way.

It is possible to begin to reverse these impacts and repair past harms with RGGI. As we have seen from other states, RGGI has lowered carbon emissions, increased state GDP, and saved people money on electric bills and hospitalization costs. RGGI is an opportunity to put the first brick in place for a just transition for dying industries like coal to transition to other industries such as clean power energy. However, we want to ensure that the RGGI rulemaking is developed in an equitable and inclusive manner taking into consideration the harms mentioned. That means while the state may be benefiting in all these ways, it is equally, if not more important for the frontline communities that are neighbors of these power plants to also receive these same benefits, especially in health outcomes and air quality, which has been promised through RGGI. So I call on you to incorporate the necessary mechanisms into the rulemaking that protects frontline communities and repairs these past and present harms. By incorporating equity measures into RGGI, we have an opportunity to address community development - tackling multiple issues related to quality of life - through a clean energy pathway. We know that living wage clean energy jobs are exponentially increasing and Pennsylvanians want more renewable energy, while the coal industry is dying out. It is critical for PA to begin to take the steps towards supporting those communities to build transition plans that can address job loss and as the carbon limits decrease through RGGI.

The revenue generated from RGGI can be invested in communities on the frontlines through the Clean Air Act. That revenue can be used towards energy efficiency, green space development, utility bill subsidies, and the development of clean renewable energy. At the same time, there must be supplemental funds to design the workforce development pathways and individual and community support for a just transition. I support the idea of RGGI and what RGGI could be. I implore that you do not do business as usual and think about who needs to be protected through this bill, so that we see lowered greenhouse gas emissions across the state and in community, improved health outcomes, and renewable energy access for all Pennsylvanians. It is the constitutional responsibility of the Department of Environmental Protection to protect citizens' absolute right to "clean air, pure water, and the preservation of natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment." Take that responsibility seriously and pass RGGI with equitable principles incorporated into the rulemaking.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

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