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Thank you for the time to speak on the subject of Pennsylvania's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative with other Mid-Atlantic states. I am thrilled to see Pennsylvania consider joining our peers across the mid-atlantic to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. I've spent the majority of my career in Pennsylvania's Colleges and Universities working to reduce energy consumption, increase sustainable practices, and generally reduce the impact of climate change. As the 4th largest state for Higher Education, our Universities have been leading the charge toward climate mitigation. However, as an educator, I also listen to students who are expressing concern, frustration, fear, and worry. Students see the scientific evidence and the hesitancy of their immediate ancestors to act upon it. These students, across the political spectrum, shake their heads in disgust when they learn that the climate scientific community has been sounding a terrifying alarm about excess carbon dioxide since before the 1980s, but we've waited this long to do anything about it.

For most of my career, people ask me in despair, what personal action could possibly limit something as large as climate change. I used to list out all the individual actions we can take, but I recently came to realize people ask this question not because they are all that unsure of the solutions. The real reason people ask me this question is because they feel hopeless that their actions will make an impact. We are hopeless because we've been too focused on the individual instead of the commonwealth of our community. By questioning our ability to solve climate change we forget that our actions collectively degraded the atmosphere to begin with, and it is our collective actions that can reverse these impacts. While there there are so many things I, and my students, are concerned about, I am seeing and feeling hope spring up as we remember stories about collective action.

During World War II when the fear of German aggression on American shores was at its height, households and businesses in cities on both coasts turned off their lights and closed their shops early to limit visible targets for German aircraft. At the height of the space race in the 1960s, Americans rallied with public support as engineers, mathematicians, policy makers, and educators all partnered to land a person on the moon. Even now, in the midst of a global pandemic, there are more stories of people collectively wearing masks and partnering on vaccine development. In times of great crisis and opportunity we lean on great collective action and hope. That is the best of who we are.

I see RGGI as a step toward hope. It will require immense collective action in the form of policy to stave off the worst challenges of climate change. RGGI is poised to reduce CO2 in Pennsylvania by 188 million tons by 2030. It can help clean up the air in our historically disenfranchised environmental justice communities such as Chester, Norristown, Philadelphia and Harrisburg. RGGI is also a proven policy that works; it has been shown to reduce power sector CO2 emissions by 45%. Pennsylvania's participation in RGGI isn't guess work policy, it works and makes sense and the vast majority of residents want to see this policy enacted.

In closing, I ask that our policy makers take a step toward hope. Most of us agree with each other about the solutions to climate change more than we may think, but to enact these solutions, we must collectively act and step toward hope, knowing that by doing something together we are becoming architects of the cleaner world we want to live in!