

**CO2 COALITION**

STATEMENT TO THE PENNSYLVANIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INITIATIVE

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Gregory R. Wrightstone

Geologist and Incoming Executive Director of the CO2 Coalition

Good afternoon. I am Gregory Wrightstone, of Allison Park, Pennsylvania and I am a life-long resident of Pennsylvania, a geologist, author, expert witness for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the incoming Executive Director of the CO2 Coalition of Arlington, Virginia. The CO2 Coalition's leadership and its 60 members are a who's who of eminent scientists studying carbon dioxide and climate change, including atmospheric physicists, climatologists, ecologists, statisticians, and energy experts.

In carrying out our mission, we seek to strengthen the understanding of the role of science and the scientific process in addressing complex public policy issues like climate change. Approaches to policy that do not adhere to the scientific process risk grave damage to the economy and to science. Such is the case with the proposal to enroll the state into the economically crippling carbon taxation scheme known as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative or RGGI.

RGGI's primary goal is to make electricity generated with natural gas and coal more expensive through a cap-and-trade system where "emission allowances" would be required to be purchased. This is a regressive taxation scheme that most harms the poorest citizens who spend a greater percentage of their income on energy and heat. RGGI would be taxing poor people in order to subsidize Big-Solar and Big-Wind to make them artificially competitive in the energy marketplace.

I will not address the obvious negative impacts this plan would have on our citizens, our companies and the expected damage to our environment from industrial scale wind and solar projects but will review the incorrect justifications presented as to why this is needed.

PA DEP Secretary Pat McDonnell has stated that "The impacts of climate change have had and will continue to have a dramatic effect on Pennsylvania communities and economies" and Tom Wolf justifies it by falsely claiming a litany of negative effects from supposed man-made warming, including increased precipitation and flooding, heat-related illness and death and worsening air pollution. None of these — absolutely none — are supported by science and

facts. These are simply fabricated assertions intended to gin up public alarm over impending climate catastrophe.

What the two either don't know or ignore is the fact that the modest warming of slightly more than one degree since 1900 combined with increasing carbon dioxide has led to an Earth and humanity that is thriving and prospering and will continue to do so. The facts and data reveal that by nearly metric the Earth's ecosystems are thriving and humanity is benefiting from this.

Leading off the governor's false climate calamities is that of increased precipitation and flooding. It is here that Tom Wolf mistakenly — or intentionally — conflates weather with climate — a common practice of the popular media. It is true that, in Pennsylvania, 2018 and 2019 had above average precipitation, but so far 2020 is on pace to be substantially below the 50-year average of 44.6 inches. Further contradicting claims of increased flooding are NOAA's records of the biggest rainfall amounts that show a decline since a peak in 1940s and 1950s.

Perhaps Gov. Wolf was recalling that he personally viewed flooding of the Susquehanna River in Harrisburg in 2018 when it crested at 17.3 feet. Much was made of the flooding at the time. However, the 2018 flood ranks just 31st on the list of greatest floods at Harrisburg — and only a bit more than half the record set by Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972.

You can bet that, if recent rainfall rates were below normal instead of above, the governor would then be claiming that the drought was due to man-made warming.

Allegations of increasing heat-related death are debunked by some of the largest global studies on the subject. Dr. Antonio Gasparrini and a large team of collaborators from around the world examined more than 74 million deaths and concluded that cold weather kills 20 times as many people as heat. Another study of temperature-associated mortality in the U.K. and Australia found that more than 15 times as many people die due to cold as heat in these countries.

The inconvenient fact is that cold kills considerably more people than heat. It is, by far, the biggest weather-related killer worldwide. A warmer globe would mean far fewer premature deaths associated with temperature.

Finally, the allegation that warmer temperatures are leading to increasing air and water pollution is dispelled by data from the EPA that reveal a long-term steady decrease in all pollutants measured despite a warming climate.

Just today, the US Energy Information Administration reported that California is the largest electric importer in the US while Pennsylvania is the largest net exporter of energy thanks to reliable, abundant and inexpensive fracked shale gas in our Commonwealth. It appears that Governor Wolf wants to make us a lot more like California by penalizing our natural gas-fired electricity generation capacity.

As to the proposals to rely more and more on wind energy, the Governor should consult the Pennsylvania Game Commission who, in 2018 permanently banned all wind projects on the 1.5 million acres of land it controls. It unanimously voted for the ban because of "a high probability of adversely impacting wildlife resources and the recreational uses associated with SGLs." The PGC found the proposals "incompatible with its mandates under the Code to protect,

propagate, manage and preserve the game and wildlife of the Commonwealth and promote recreational opportunities.”

RGGI would damage the Pennsylvania economy with higher energy prices and job losses for no reason other than to boost tax revenues for a spendthrift government and enrich the politically favored in the so-called green-energy business. Gov. Wolf’s promotion of fear with false claims to advance the program is demagoguery at its worst.