



Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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Good afternoon, my name is Chloe Selles, and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am a resident of Harrisburg, a dedicated advocate for climate action, a person of faith, and a concerned community member. I have chosen to testify today on behalf of myself and my community because I care about Pennsylvania's people. **I am testifying in support of PA joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and for DEP to sign on to the proposed rulemaking without major provisions.**

As others have already mentioned, climate change is not a future possibility. It is a present reality, devastating the lives and livelihoods of communities across the globe, including those right here in Pennsylvania. Before my time, the city of Harrisburg was hit by environmental disasters like the Three Mile Island meltdown in 1979 and Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972. Both of these disasters left their mark: Hurricane Agnes, for example, flooded and destroyed the homes of hundreds of families and dislocated entire neighborhoods.¹ Climate change promises a steady increase of these events. ***How many more disasters can communities like Harrisburg sustain?***

Just a hundred feet from my door flows the polluted waters of the Susquehanna river, an incredible and historic river that has been trashed with sewage, stormwater run-off, and abandoned mine drainage.² In a desperate attempt to fund a restoration of our outdated infrastructure, the Mayor of Harrisburg made notice last summer that he was looking to privatize the city's water, selling access to public drinking water and all other wastewater assets to a private company.³ An outcry arose from residents, because we know what privatization means -- time and time again, we've seen that it means more, not less of a financial burden on people already struggling. It means more, not less pollution. **And clean water, like clean air, is a human right.**

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, many have been confined to their homes and too many have lost their homes altogether because they couldn't pay rent. We've seen that access to electricity is as necessary as clean air and water. And how can we have access to clean air and water, when we rely on a dirty, outdated, inefficient, and unsustainable energy system? A system that we are *barely* functioning with: one that *does not* serve the low-income family

¹ <http://pabook2.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/Agnes.html>

² <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0828/ML082880724.pdf>

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<https://theburgnews.com/news/harrisburg-considers-selling-water-sewer-system-asks-interested-parties-to-respond>

struggling to pay rising costs of housing and healthcare on a stagnant minimum wage, in the same way it *does not* serve coal workers facing the inevitable closing of their plant. No less than eighteen coal-fired plants in the state have already closed or transitioned to gas in recent years, and there is no protection for these workers.

We need funds to invest in energy efficiency to help struggling families, and we need funds to protect jobs and provide retraining for workers facing unemployment. We need these as much as we need to invest in a 21st century clean energy system that won't leave anyone in the dark. **For these reasons, I urge you to sign on to RGGI, without major revisions to the rules as proposed.** Thank you.