



David K. Foster RGGI DEP Public Hearing Testimony, 12/09/2020

My name is David Foster. I live in Dillsburg, York County. I am here as a private citizen but also am a member of the Evangelical Environmental Network. Thank you for this opportunity to testify at this DEP Public Hearing on the Proposed Rule Making for RGGI.

It is with great enthusiasm that I support Pennsylvania's full participation in RGGI through the Proposed Rule Making. I have worked all my professional life in environmental area including educating other in environmental ethics and helping others to come to know the Creation around us. Personally, I have been enthusiastic about renewable energy with pursuit of efficiency in appliances, reduction of our use, etc. However, we only recently personally embraced CO2 reduction this summer when my wife and I personally installed a photovoltaic system on our roof. We felt the challenges of transition at every step as we reinforced the roof, installed the panels, and hooked the wiring in to our electric panel. We felt the final victory of this project as our last electric bill was \$10.01. We celebrated the six similar system in our neighborhood were equally split between political parties as per election signs in the yard. Why we were able to do it- it finally made financial sense. Yet we fully realize this is not enough to truly offset the magnitude of climate change already seen and projected into the future.

Pennsylvania's full participation in RGGI now makes sense. It strategically targets an area of CO2 emissions where we can make a difference NOW: CO2 emissions in electric power production. It does so at a way that will not be a drag on our economy but rather provide a net benefit. This is proven by increases in productivity in the ten historic RGGI states as compared to states not participating. It is proven by increases in net revenue to deal with environmental problems created in the past, and proven by net decreases in electric prices in those RGGI states compared to net increases in electric prices in non-RGGI states. These are proven values not modelled values.

Projected benefits discussed by others and modelled by the DEP are also very promising including net reduction of CO2 by more than 180,000,000 tons by 2030 with attendant reductions in Nitrogen Oxides, Sulfur Dioxide, Mercury and Ozone. This will make major progress towards meeting goals in the Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan, a goal which polling shows a majority of Pennsylvanian's support, even those in conservation districts.

The promising human health benefits from RGGI, especially in respiratory health and especially to communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities alike, include reduced rates of asthma and other respiratory disease. They also include less missed workdays, less hospital visits due to respiratory illness, and increase in the overall state economy.

I strongly encourage us to also consider using revenues from RGGI towards correcting environmental issues in historically impacted communities, towards workers being displaced in the electric plants using fossil fuels, and towards expansion of solar and wind generation in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is a historic leader in the transition of energy production from once source to another. In 1835 the PA Legislature banned use of charcoal in any new iron furnaces because we had decimated our forests. We led the way in using coal to produce steel. The first oil wells in the United States were here. We lead the way in hydroelectric and had the first in commercial nuclear electric generation facility. We have opened the doors for solar and wind electricity. It is time now to join the lead into an overall-low carbon electric future.

In conclusion, I echo the benefits others have shared in this public testimony. I strongly support Pennsylvania's entry into RGGI and encourage direction of monies from RGGI to development of clean and renewable energy in communities most historically impacted by fossil fuel generation of electricity in the past. Thank you for allowing me to share my comments today.

STATS-

1. Substantial progress towards greenhouse gas emissions goals outlined in the Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan. Specifically reduction of PA CO2 emissions by 188,000,000 tons by 2030. A majority of Pennsylvanian's feel this is important, even in conservative districts.
2. An increase in the health and productivity of our citizens. Our participation in RGGI will reduce PA pollution from Nitrogen Oxides by 112,000 tons, Sulfur Dioxide by 67,000 tons, and attendant reductions in mercury as well by 2030. The DEP projects health results from this to be up to \$6.3 billion by 2030, averaging between \$232 million to \$525 million per year. The human projected health benefits alone by 2030 are prevention up to 639 premature and 30,000 fewer hospital visits from respiratory illnesses including asthma. RGGI reductions could further avoid over 83,000 workdays lost to respiratory disease.
3. Economic benefits. States that have been participating in RGGI have overall experienced more economic growth (+47% GDP), less increase in power costs (-5.7% vs. +8.6%), and a more stable power price market than non-participants. Here it could mean an increase in Gross State Product of \$2 Billion and a net increase of 27,000 jobs by 2030.
4. Revenue generation (\$3 Billion to PA by 2030), a substantial fraction of which that can be directed by Pennsylvania to ease transitions already underway. In particular, coal will likely decline by 80% in power production due to market forces outside of RGGI. RGGI will provide non-tax revenue to aid transition of coal workers to other sectors; new revenue that would not otherwise be there.

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