



Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Kate Turkeltaub, and I am a 19 year old student at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

As the fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the nation, Pennsylvania has a responsibility to be a leader in implementing climate solutions and reducing emissions. As a student at Lehigh, clean air is extremely personal to me. Whether I'm walking around campus, going for a run, or exploring hiking trails, I spend a lot of time outdoors. I do not want to continue to worry about how my time outside exposes me to harmful air pollution. Time spent outside should be used to enjoy nature, and not thinking about how polluted the air in Pennsylvania truly is.

RGGI will play a crucial part in reducing carbon dioxide emissions here in Pennsylvania where climate change has already caused more extreme weather, such as higher temperature that exacerbate poor air quality. To continue to fight for the clean air that we all deserve, Pennsylvania must join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (known as RGGI).

Many of my closest friends here in Pennsylvania suffer from asthma and are predisposed to the risks of air pollution. Cutting greenhouse gases under RGGI has the added benefit of significantly improving our air quality by reducing pollution from sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxide (NO_x), and particulate matter. These pollutants are linked to health problems including respiratory illness. Hundreds of premature deaths from respiratory illnesses could be prevented, as well as 30,000 fewer hospital visits for these illnesses. 10% of adults in Pennsylvania suffer from asthma, and their health needs to be protected. Our health can not be left in the hands of big polluters.

Air pollution reductions from RGGI will particularly benefit those most impacted by poor air quality, such as the local members of the South Bethlehem community that Lehigh students call home. The town of Bethlehem is a low-income neighborhood that suffers from a lack of economic and political resources, and they need our help in demanding that their health matters. Environmental justice is necessary to ensure the health and wellness of all Pennsylvanians and not just those with the financial and political resources to ensure it.

Outside of school, I am lucky to call Connecticut home, where the benefits of lower carbon dioxide emissions are obvious. As Connecticut has already joined RGGI, it is readily apparent that Pennsylvania must do the same. RGGI works and the data is indisputable: from 2008 through 2018, carbon pollution has decreased by 47% in participating RGGI states, outpacing the rest of the country by 90%. This proves how

detrimental it is for Pennsylvania to adopt RGGI, as the states that have already joined continue to pave the way for a safer environment.

In Pennsylvania, our constitution guarantees the right for all residents to clean water to drink and clean air to breathe. Joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is one major step we can take to ensure our air is cleaner and to reduce pollution.

Thank you.

https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data_states.htm