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Thank you for allowing me to speak. I am especially thankful for the opportunity to speak virtually during COVID. This also allows me as a resident of **rural** PA to have the opportunity to speak when normally it would be difficult for me to make it to a hearing.

I would like to talk about why I support RGGI from two perspectives: because it impacts our health and because it invests in a growing industry.

My first point is about the health benefits that RGGI can have for PA residents. You've heard many testimonies about the impact of air pollution on asthma and other health impacts. But I want to talk about a different issue: Dementia and Alzheimer's. New evidence has found a link between *pollution* and *cognitive* diseases like the many forms of *dementia*. A recent Wall Street Journal article discussed the link between dementia and where one lives. Over 5 million Americans suffer from dementia and this number is expected to nearly **triple** by [2050](#). Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death in the US and, in 2020, Alzheimer's will cost the US \$305 billion [dollars](#). About 280,000 Pennsylvanians struggle with this disease and that number is predicted to grow by 14% over [time](#). This issue is near and dear to my heart because I watched Alzheimer's take my grandmother and, this past October, my father-in-law. Both of my parents also now struggle with the cognitive impacts of this disease.

I'd like to take a moment to talk about the impact dementia has had on my father. He was a brilliant research chemist who had over 30 patents to his name. In the last decade, his mind has declined to the point that he can't complete a simple math equation. If we do not address pollution, I fear for what this will mean for myself and my children and our chances of having dementia. States that have RGGI have reduced power sector carbon dioxide production by 45% since 2005 and reduced pollution that is linked with [dementia](#). RGGI may reduce the rise of cases in our state as well as the costs associated with it.

Next, I would like to talk about the impact RGGI can have on area jobs. My grandfather and my in-laws' families earned their living in coal mining. I reside in Cambria county, which is a county that has historically relied on the coal industry for jobs (so much so that a new brewery in my

area is called Coal Country Brewery). I understand the benefit it has had on the economy of this region throughout time.

But the fossil fuels industry has been on the decline for decades, especially in the last few years. To give an idea of this, in 1923 there were 883,000 coal mining jobs in the US. By 2010, the number has declined to 86,057 and even more to 52,714 in [2019](#). My written comments will include a graph showing the number of coal mining jobs over time - this graph makes it obvious that this is a dying industry. RGGI, on the other hand, is predicted to add 27,000 jobs to the commonwealth and grow our economy by \$1.9 billion by [2030](#). A recent [study](#) showed that between the years of 2008 and 2012, almost 50,000 coal jobs were lost while almost 80,000 jobs were added. In 2016, noting this decline, Harvard Business Review suggested retraining coal workers for solar [employment](#). Let's take their advice and retrain workers from a dying industry to work for a growing industry.

I urge you to pass RGGI for the health of elderly people like my father and for the good of employment in our state. **Thank you** again for allowing me to speak virtually today.