

**Stephen Hoffman**

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**From:** ecomment@pa.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 6, 2021 8:56 PM  
**To:** Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; IRRRC; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; regcomments@pa.gov; ntroutman@pasen.gov; timothy.collins@pasenate.com; gking@pahousegop.com; siversen@pahouse.net  
**Cc:** c-jflanagan@pa.gov  
**Subject:** Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

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The enclosed comment was received as part of the following testimony:

**Testimony name:** Public Hearing 9 (1pm) - #7-559  
**Testimony date:** 12/14/2020 12:00:00 AM  
**Testimony location:** WebEx

**Re: eComment System**

**The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559).**

Commenter Information:

Michael Coblenz  
(mcoblenz@gmail.com)  
5440 Bartlett Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217 US

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Comments entered:

My name is Dr. Michael Coblenz. I'm speaking as a resident of Pittsburgh, 15217. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

When I was a child, I learned to hike and camp outdoors through Scouting, which developed my appreciation for the wonder of the natural world. You already know about the seriousness of the climate emergency. We are causing an unprecedented mass extinction event, and making it harder for our children to live healthy, productive lives. We are increasingly contributing to hunger around the world, as food crops become less productive and are threatened by extreme weather events. These events are driven by climate change caused by our emissions of greenhouse gases.

Part of my obligation as a scientist is to encourage others to attend to the research coming from my colleagues in climatology. But my testimony today is driven by my moral imperative to my

children. I have two daughters, from whom I have borrowed this planet. What kind of world will they inherit?

When my wife and I bought our house in Pittsburgh six years ago, we made concrete changes to substantially reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We did this as a matter of both environmental and fiscal responsibility. We insulated and air-sealed, reducing our natural gas consumption (and cost) by a factor of two. We installed solar panels, which generate most of the electricity we need. I hope to some day terminate our reliance on natural gas for heating. But my house is just one of thousands of buildings throughout Pennsylvania, all of which are contributing to climate change.

Membership in the regional greenhouse gas initiative will provide critically-needed funds for energy efficiency retrofits. In 2018, RGGI invested \$94M in energy efficiency, out of \$248M of investment funds. These investments will save taxpayers \$2B in energy bills and avoid the emission of 4.6M tons of CO2 pollution [1]. In addition, these investments are efficient: each \$1 of RGGI investment stimulates \$2.52 of additional private investment. These funds can reduce energy bills, particularly of low-income residents.

I spent 11 years as a student at Carnegie Mellon University — that's a bachelor's, master's, and a Ph.D. And I saw countless students paying huge energy bills for their rental apartments, which they could scarcely afford, because the Pittsburgh housing stock is very old and many landlords have not invested in efficiency improvements. Investments in energy efficiency that are stimulated by the RGGI will enable countless students and low-income PA residents to spend their money on things that help them build better lives for themselves and their families — recreation in PA parks, buying healthy food from PA farms, and supporting local businesses, such as restaurants and, sometime soon, theaters.

Reducing emissions from fossil fuel plants will have the ancillary benefit of reducing particulate, NOx, and other pollution. In Pittsburgh, there are beautiful, sunny days when I can't let my kids play outside because the air is too polluted. The nearby Cheswick coal power plant emits over 4,000 tons of NOx emissions every year, as well as 180 pounds of mercury, which is a neurotoxin. If you recall warnings to not eat too much of certain kinds of seafood, this is because the seafood is contaminated by mercury emitted into the atmosphere by coal power plants; the mercury then falls in rain and accumulates in fish through the food chain. The reductions in fossil fuel combustion provided by RGGI will have surprisingly broad environmental health implications.

Joining RGGI will enable Pennsylvanians and people around the world to live healthier, happier lives. It will be a step toward fulfilling our responsibility to our children to provide a safe planet, which they will some day inherit. I urge Pennsylvania to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

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No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Shirley

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