



## Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

Flora Cardoni

PennEnvironment

1429 Walnut St, Ste 1100, Philadelphia, PA 19102

[flora@pennenvironment.org](mailto:flora@pennenvironment.org)

My name is Flora Cardoni and I am the Field Director with PennEnvironment, the statewide, citizen based, environmental nonprofit group. PennEnvironment works to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, public lands to enjoy, and a safe, livable climate for generations to come. Thank you for this opportunity to testify today, on behalf of PennEnvironment, in support of Pennsylvania joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

I am testifying because as a young person today, I am extremely scared and concerned about my future, and the future of the planet, in the face of the climate crisis. I am also testifying on behalf of thousands of PennEnvironment's members and volunteers across the state who have attended events, made calls, signed petitions and written letters in support of RGGI this year and the 70% of Pennsylvanians who support the state joining the program.

RGGI is so widely supported because we are in the midst of a climate crisis. Here in Pennsylvania, we're already seeing the impacts of climate change, from more extreme heat days, more frequent bad air days, and booming tick populations threatening our health, to more frequent and extreme downpours and flash flooding, threatening our communities. All around the world, food and water insecurity is rising, and there are more devastating wildfires and hurricanes destroying our homes. In the face of these worsening impacts, many Pennsylvanians are wondering what can be done to help tackle climate pollution right here in the Commonwealth. Joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is one common sense step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling climate change. And we do not have time to waste.

Over the past twelve years, RGGI has proven to be the most successful state-level program in the nation when it comes to addressing greenhouse gas emissions. The data is indisputable: from 2008 through 2018, carbon emissions reduction in RGGI states outpaced the rest of the country by 90%. We must follow their lead. As one of the largest climate polluters in the country, Pennsylvania joining RGGI would have an outsized impact on reducing emissions. In fact, if Pennsylvania joins RGGI, we could reduce our carbon emissions by 188 million tons, which is equivalent to taking more than 36 million cars off the road, over just the first decade.

These reductions to climate pollution are not the only benefit. By joining this program and reducing harmful emissions from power plants, we will also significantly improve our air quality. RGGI is proven to reduce particulate matter pollution and pollution from sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide. These pollutants are linked to health problems including respiratory illness, heart attack, stroke, cancer, and mental health problems. Reducing this pollution means fewer hospital visits, asthma attacks, and premature deaths across our state.

RGGI also provides a huge opportunity to invest in Pennsylvania and the clean energy future we need and deserve. The initiative is projected to put nearly \$2 billion into the state's economy over the next decade alone. This money can be used to fund important programs like low-income home weatherization projects, energy efficiency initiatives, renewable energy development and jobs training, and more. These investments can do even more to clean up our air, fight climate change, and help the people of Pennsylvania.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a time-tested, commonsense program with a long track record of success. As the fourth largest greenhouse gas emitter in the country, it is Pennsylvania's duty to start lowering our carbon pollution and cleaning up our air. RGGI is a step we can, and should, take today towards ensuring that all Pennsylvanians have a safe, livable climate for generations to come. I urge you to approve the plan for Pennsylvania to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.