



Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

My name is Valerie Cheney and I'm from Media, Pennsylvania. I currently attend the University of Pittsburgh and I'm pleased to be here today to support the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

I saw a statistic recently that the average winter temperatures in the Philadelphia region have risen by 4.8 degrees over the last 50 years. While this may not seem like much, many of us here have witnessed firsthand the devastating impacts brought on by these changes. Hurricanes and severe weather storms are increasingly more common in this area, so much so that many people in my town now own generators to prepare for power outages. Perhaps even more alarming is that we now have tornadoes here. Five years ago, a tornado in Aston caused a tree to fall on my friend Will's house, and the damage was so severe that the house was subsequently condemned. Fortunately no one was hurt, but these visible impacts of climate change are only a part of the problem... We must also acknowledge the aspects of climate change that we cannot see. For years now I've been living in Pittsburgh, but only just found out that the city consistently ranks as having the worst air quality in the country. This pollution in the air cannot always be seen by our eyes, but it is certainly felt by our health.

That's why I support the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative -- because I believe it is in everyone's best interest to treat this matter with urgency. We cannot afford to wait for more catastrophes to strike before taking action. Each day that we wait, we put more Pennsylvanians' health and safety at risk. By joining RGGI, we can reduce the amount of harmful air pollution, which will particularly benefit those impacted by poor air quality, such as children, seniors, and low income families. We can cut carbon emissions by 188 million tons, which is the equivalent to removing 36 million cars off the road. And we can do all this while generating over 27,000 new jobs in this state. These profound changes will certainly lead to a favorable outcome in terms of public health, the economy, and the sustainability of our planet.

As one of the largest climate polluters in the country, I believe Pennsylvania has a responsibility to act and protect people like my friend Will, who lost his house due to a severe weather storm. This responsibility is outlined in the state constitution, that guarantees the right for all residents to have access to clean drinking water and safe air to breathe. Joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is one major step we can take not only to reduce carbon emissions, but

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