



January 14, 2021

Dear Chairperson McDonnell and Environmental Quality Board,

The Abington-Cheltenham-Jenkintown Area League of Women Voters asks for the swift implementation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), Our League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania also supports RGGI,

Pennsylvanians have an outsized footprint in our responsibility for climate change:

- ★ Pennsylvania's electric power sector is currently the fourth dirtiest in the nation,
- ★ We are the third worst state in terms of greenhouse gas pollution,
- ★ We are the second largest producer of natural gas and the third largest producer of coal.

The good news is that Pennsylvania can move forward with RGGI, with the assurance that the benefits we're likely to reap, based on the successful experience of the other RGGI states:

- ★ An Acacia Center (a leading non-profit organization that researches, develops, and advocates for innovative policies that tackle the region's environmental challenges while promoting sustainable economies) reports shows that participating RGGI states have cut carbon pollution by a remarkable 47% in the last twelve years, outpacing the rest of the country by 90%,
- ★ This analysis also found that RGGI has driven substantial reductions in harmful co-pollutants, making the region's air cleaner and its people healthier.

So it's not surprising that RGGI is projected to deliver the following benefits to Pennsylvania by 2030:

- ★ An addition of \$1.9 billion dollars to our economy,
- ★ More than 27,000 new jobs, and
- ★ \$6.3 billion in health benefits.

RGGI will give us a stronger and cleaner economy, better for our children and grandchildren and without having to choose between the environment and the economy. Moreover, the \$6+ billion in projected health benefits will result from 30,000 fewer hospital visits due to asthma and other respiratory diseases, heart attacks, stroke, diabetes and high blood pressure.

It is essential to understand how cleaning up our dirty power plants is a matter of social equity and fairness. Almost always, dirty power plants are built in low-income areas that are disproportionately inhabited by people of color. Dirty power plants don't get built in places like the Abington-Jenkintown-Cheltenham Area, where our local League members live.

We have a personal responsibility to recognize that the electricity we use in our homes is hurting others who live near those dirty power plants but can't readily get out of harm's way. RGGI goes after the environmental racism that is baked into our electricity system. RGGI doesn't solve the whole problem, but it takes an important step towards social justice.

Locally elected leaders in Abington, Ambler, Cheltenham, and Springfield-Montgomery County, where our members reside, have passed resolutions to use 100% clean, renewable electricity by 2035, and 100% clean building heat and vehicles by 2050 for both municipal operations and the broader community. RGGI will create a cleaner energy grid so that our local leaders and citizens may achieve these goals.

In closing, we thank Governor Wolf, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Environmental Quality Board for their leadership in promulgating this rule. We support not just RGGI, but its rapid implementation in Pennsylvania so that our citizens can start to reap the benefits from a cleaner, more stable atmosphere and a stronger economy as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your attention.

Roberta Brunner, Co-President
 League of Women Voters of the Abington-Cheltenham-Jenkintown Area