



**Testimony for PA CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation  
Rev. Edward Allen Drew on behalf of the Climate Witness Project and Multiple  
Other Endorsers  
January 13, 2021**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit a public comment.

My name is Rev. Edward Allen Drew. I'm a Commissioned Pastor in the Christian Reformed Church, North America (CRCNA), I'm on the pastoral staff at Spirit and Truth Fellowship Church in the Hunting Park neighborhood of North Philadelphia, and I'm the East Coast Regional Organizer with the Climate Witness Project, a joint initiative of the CRCNA and the global humanitarian organization World Renew. I am offering this statement not simply as an individual, but as a representative of the will of the Climate Witness Project (representing 120 congregations and 1,286 individual members), 7 PA churches (including my own), 3 PA faith-based independent schools, the Philadelphia region of a national college ministry, and one Cleveland-based climate initiative. My list of endorsers is at the bottom of this testimony.

I am writing to emphatically support the affirmation and implementation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, in our state of Pennsylvania, along with a few adjustments.

RGGI is a crucial step in our collective fight against climate change. There is overwhelming international scientific consensus that the climate crisis is a grave global threat, not only to our environment, but to humanity and human civilization, with poor communities and nations bearing the heaviest burden. Our planet is steadily warming as a direct result of the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas and this warming is causing the intricate system of planetary dynamics to destabilize and cause an increase in fires, storms, heat, drought, flooding, disease, and crop failures. Here in PA, we're already experiencing an increase in heat and flooding as a direct result of the changing climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made it clear that if our planet warms above 1.5 C above preindustrial levels, the results for our planet, for people, and for human civilization will be severe. We have already warmed to 1 C above pre-industrial levels, so we have very little time left. Scientist have made it clear that in order to avoid passing above 1.5 C, we must reduce global carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, get to net zero by 2050, and then get to net negative beyond that (meaning we are removing significantly more carbon from the atmosphere than we are putting in). The numbers don't lie – we are in a truly dire situation, and there is, quite simply, a moral imperative to act boldly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly here in PA, where the electric power sector produces the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest greenhouse gas emissions of all the states in the US. There is no more time to make small, incremental adjustments. We have to make major changes now.

RGGI is a really exciting way we can do this. Expert analysis shows that participation in RGGI will enable PA's carbon pollution to be cut by 21% by 2030, or 188 million tons. This is the equivalent of removing 4 million cars from the road during that period of time. Emissions need to be cut significantly more than this to reach our planetary goals, **but this is still a really important start**, and combined with other growing efforts we'll hopefully be able to do our part in the critical 50% global carbon drawdown that must take place over the next 10 years.

RGGI could have a number of other benefits as well.

An in-depth analysis for the Department of Environmental Protection projects that RGGI will create 27,000 jobs for Pennsylvanians, add \$1.9 billion to the state's economy, and generate hundreds of millions of dollars annually to help eliminate air pollution, spur job creation, support working Pennsylvanians, and help workers in the fossil fuel industry successfully transition into the growing clean energy economy. While electricity rate increases are possible, in other RGGI states strategic allocation of revenue towards energy efficiency work has enabled consumers to save \$1 billion on their energy bills, increasing disposable income, which in turn has increased overall GDP. Furthermore, through reducing statewide pollution RGGI is expected to create \$6 billion in health benefits through 2030, 45,000 fewer asthma attacks, and 1,000 fewer cases of childhood bronchitis.

Finally, with a few strategic adjustments, RGGI could play an important role in strengthening environmental and economic justice for the poor. As people of faith, I and my community of endorsers believe it is our responsibility to stand with the most vulnerable among us. The impacts of pollution and climate change fall heaviest on those with the least. I live in Mt Airy, a middle-income community, and I do much of my faith-based organizing work in Hunting Park, a low-income community. I experience daily the stark differences in summer heat wave severity, tree canopy, green space, and corresponding health issues between these two communities. It is fundamentally unjust that two communities, both full of people just as amazing and deserving of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, should have such different experiences.

RGGI, however, could have a positive impact on communities like Hunting Park, if it works in a few strategic adjustments to its plan. We recommend that the final RGGI plan incorporate strategies that (1) direct a large portion of its revenue towards low and moderate income (LMI) family home repairs and weatherization, as well as greening projects in LMI communities; (2) include safeguards that protect LMI families from any electricity rate increases resulting from the program; and (3) ensure that dirty emitters are unable to move into low-income neighborhoods to save money. With these adjustments, RGGI could make communities like Hunting Park greener, healthier, more energy efficient, and financially stronger.

And so, friends, the choice is clear. RGGI is not only a crucial step in our generation's fight against the climate crisis – it is also an incredible economic and health opportunity for PA, and by incorporating a few strategic adjustments to the plan, it can become a meaningful engine of environmental and economic justice in our great state.

Therefore I, along with all of the endorsers of this message, urge the Environmental Quality Board of PA to make the adjustments recommended above, affirm RGGI, and pass it along to the Governor for implementation.

Sincerely,

Rev. Edward Allen Drew  
Climate Witness Project East Coast Regional Organizer  
420 W. Durham St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19119  
[AllenCWP12@gmail.com](mailto:AllenCWP12@gmail.com)

***Organizations that are endorsing this statement:***

8<sup>th</sup> Street Community Church  
3760 N. 8<sup>th</sup> St., Philadelphia, PA 19140

Chestnut Hill United Church  
8812 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19118

Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields  
8000 St Martins Ln, Philadelphia, PA 19118

Climate Witness Project  
World Renew and CRCNA, 1700 28th St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508

First United Methodist Church of Germantown  
6001 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19144

Hunting Park Christian Academy  
4400 N 6th St, Philadelphia, PA 19140

Intervarsity Christian Fellowship in Urban Philadelphia  
49 W. Upsal St., Philadelphia, PA 19119

One Hope Community Church  
4318 N Lawrence St, Philadelphia, PA 19140

Saint Gabriel's Episcopal Church  
101 E Roosevelt Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19120

Spirit and Truth Fellowship Church  
4455 N 6th St, Philadelphia, PA 19140

Vocatio Career Prep High School  
633 W Hunting Park Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19140

West Side Creation Care Team  
4427 Franklin Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44113