



## Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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My name is Karen Melton, I live in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and am speaking as a private citizen. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this policy.

There are so many factors in support of Pennsylvania joining RGGI, and many that I won't repeat have already been noted by other speakers during these hearings. One important point that industry opponents to RGGI like to claim is that it will cause utility bills to rise (they like to use words like skyrocket) when we know for a fact that electricity rates fell in current RGGI participant states while they increased in the rest of the country (1). This study will be footnoted in my written comments. At the same time rates fell, emissions declined in these states.

For every proposed regulation that would cause the fossil fuel industry to pay for any of the pollution they cause, the claim is always that it will result in economic calamity, which of course it never does. The fact that the fossil fuel industry gets to pollute our air and water, not only for free, but heavily subsidized by taxpayers, who then also pay the price of pollution, many with their health, has been described by economists as the worst market failure in history. The cost of climate change across the globe is already in the trillions.

Here in Pennsylvania so much has already been lost or is at risk from climate change. The state tree, the state bird, and the state fish are all moving north as the Ruffed Grouse, the Brook Trout and the Eastern Hemlock find Pennsylvania a less and less suitable climate. Some of our prized agricultural crops such as peaches and sweet corn are at risk from a warming climate along with our hardwoods and the winter recreation industry (2).

As one of the largest emissions producers in the world, PA has a lot to answer for when it comes to climate change, and joining RGGI is a step in the right direction. Our air and water are already significantly degraded along with many other components of our ecosystem.

We are beginning the transition from a fossil fuel economy to a clean energy economy – that much is certain. The question is only whether we will do it fast enough to save the natural systems humans depend on. That's literally what we are discussing here – whether we care enough about food, air and water to join this modest system for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector. As part of this energy transition we should look for ways to help the people and communities that will be impacted by declining fossil fuel industries. Funding made available by RGGI for energy efficiency certainly will create one promising employment track. Let's have that conversation and rapidly move forward with joining RGGI. Thank you.

1. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative 10 years in review

[https://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Acadia-Center\\_RGGI\\_10-Years-in-Review\\_2019-09-17.pdf](https://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Acadia-Center_RGGI_10-Years-in-Review_2019-09-17.pdf)

2. Climate Change in Pennsylvania, Impacts and Solutions for the Keystone State

<https://ucsusa.org/resources/climate-change-pennsylvania>