

**Stephen Hoffman**

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Sent: Monday, January 25, 2021 4:50 PM
To: EP, RegComments
Subject: [External] Written copy of oral testimony given on December 10, 2020 regarding RGGI: CO2 Budget Trading Program [50 Pa.B. 6212] [Saturday, November 7, 2020]

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RGGI testimony by Dennis Groce for Dec 10 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Dennis Groce. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). I speak to you today as a Pennsylvania resident and Chairperson of the Synod Green Team for the Northwest Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We're a group of volunteers who educate and inspire our congregations' members and their communities in 15 counties of northwestern Pennsylvania to care for the earth and its creatures.

The Bible tells us, "...no one knows the hour or the day..." for events in the future. Still, much of the world, including Pennsylvania, has continued to act as if we "know" that we have plenty of time to act to rein in climate change. For greenhouse gas emissions, now is the time for Pennsylvania to act to rein in those emissions, through RGGI.

EPA's May 2020 "Report on the Environment" (1) confirms that climate change is increasing floods and droughts; heat-related illnesses and deaths; severity of heat waves; and degradation of coastal and land-based ecosystems, among other effects.

I live near Lake Erie – it's my "backyard neighbor." I see the increased frequency of severe weather events and flooding on Lake Erie. In recent years, I have seen Lake Erie storms produce waves and surge water up to 40 yards up the beach from the normal water's edge. I have neighbors who have owned property for decades that is now being degraded by the intense storms. These storms are the worst in memory of the oldest residents in my area. Carbon emissions reductions facilitated by a program like RGGI can meaningfully address climate change and in so doing, can help reduce the frequency and strength of those storms.

Several of my acquaintances have had children who suffered from asthma and need regular therapy and treatment. Cleaner air facilitated by RGGI can help reduce the frequency of those illnesses.

The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by the power industry has benefits beyond the environment and health. RGGI can stimulate cleaner energy jobs that will survive into the future, serving Pennsylvania families for generations to come.

The proposed cap and invest strategy as part of RGGI has worked well in other states in our region to the benefit of their economy and the environment. You have the opportunity now to put Pennsylvania on a long but

necessary path, along with other states, to help lead the world to reduce the acceleration of climate change while encouraging a forward-looking renewable energy sector that can provide jobs well into the future.

Clearly, we must make this the “hour and the day” when Pennsylvania takes this action through RGGI to help prevent many, many dimensions of damage to our earth, including ourselves and fellow creatures. We depend on you to act on Pennsylvania’s Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Once again, thank you.

(1) <https://www.epa.gov/report-environment/greenhouse-gases#impacts>