

Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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I am speaking as a private citizen, although I have been actively engaged with environmental organizations and issues for decades. Over these decades, I have observed the changes caused by our warming planet, even in my own backyard. I am alarmed by the trajectory of these change. **As the recent United Nations report stated, we are in the middle of a climate emergency. We cannot dither about action to reduce CO2. We cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good, when it comes to taking actions.**

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is an important measure to reduce carbon emissions from the electric power sector, a significant source of carbon emissions.

Pennsylvania is a significant emitter of carbon pollution, both nationally and globally. Pennsylvania exports much electric power. Why not reduce the carbon footprint of Pennsylvania's power sector?

We must not wait to reduce emissions from the power sector. A warming climate already has and will continue to impair water quality with algal blooms; harm recreational industries such as winter sports and fishing; increase disease vectors such as mosquitoes and ticks; increase disease vectors in forests; destabilize agriculture; and subject many areas of the state to increased flooding, ground destabilization, and wind damage. **The human and financial costs of climate change are growing.**

RGGI puts a **reasonable and step-wise achievable** limit on collective carbon emissions. It allows power producers to assess by how much they can reduce emissions and determine their own approaches to carbon reductions. Each year the carbon limit will be lowered and less pollution will be emitted.

RGGI is a cap and invest program. It is not a "tax". The experience in other states that have already implemented RGGI has been positive, generating auction proceeds to invest in efforts to improve residential energy efficiency, thereby saving money for power customers.

Various uses of RGGI funds by participating states have been for promotion of renewable energy projects, job training, and electric bill payment assistance for low-income consumers. This sounds good for Pennsylvania!

RGGI works. Since the RGGI was launched more than a decade ago, participating states have cut their carbon pollution in half. They have done this while saving residents hundreds of millions of dollars on energy bills, and creating thousands of new jobs in the clean energy sector. (Pennsylvania Bulletin).

RGGI detractors argue that RGGI will cause the loss of jobs at coal-fired power plants. This has already happened and will continue, RGGI or not. The mix of jobs in Pennsylvania and in the United States has regularly changed. We call it progress. **With RGGI being a cap and "invest" approach, we can expect investment in new technologies, bringing new jobs.** DEP's model estimates that from 2022 to 2030, participating in RGGI could lead to an increase in Gross State Product of nearly \$2 billion and a net increase of over 27,000 jobs in this Commonwealth (Pennsylvania Bulletin). Should any area of the state experience more disruption than another, funds can be directed there to ensure a just transition.

RGGI will have **positive effects on air quality and health.** By investing in energy efficiency and clean energy, we will reduce harmful pollutants like particulates, mercury, sulfur dioxide, and ozone.

There are already ten (and soon to be 11) states in RGGI. Those states made the decision to join RGGI because it was in their interests to do so. Joining RGGI will be a change in the right direction for Pennsylvania.

There is broad support for RGGI among Pennsylvanians. A survey in March of likely 2020 voters in Pennsylvania found 79% support for a proposal to zero out carbon pollution from power plants.

I urge the EQB to adopt the regulations to bring Pennsylvania into the Regional Greenhouse Gas initiative.