



Stephen Hoffman

From: ecomment@pa.gov
Sent: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 8:24 PM
To: Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; IRRRC; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; regcomments@pa.gov; ntroutman@pasen.gov; timothy.collins@pasenate.com; gking@pahousegop.com
Cc: c-jflanaga@pa.gov
Subject: Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

CAUTION: **EXTERNAL SENDER** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.



The enclosed comment was received as part of the following testimony:

Testimony name: Public Hearing 2 (1pm) - #7-559
Testimony date: 12/8/2020 12:00:00 AM
Testimony location: WebEx

Re: eComment System

The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559).

Commenter Information:

Richard Tolin
 (rtolin@comcast.net)
 705 Cedar Lane
 Villanova, PA 19085 US

Comments entered:

Oral testimony given at 8 December 2020, 1 p.m. public hearing. (See below).

I urge you all to support RGGI because it will benefit Pennsylvania in multiple ways: It will result in increased employment, dramatically reduce healthcare costs, provide an opportunity to address environmental and economic injustice, and, most importantly, will make Pennsylvania a safer and healthier place to live.

I assume that you are all aware of the EPA models that show adoption of RGGI would grow the PA economy with an additional 30,000 jobs and additional \$1.9 billion to the Gross State Product by 2030 with a cost of only an average of \$8.50/year for a family at \$50,000/year income.¹ Thus, there is clearly a strong argument to be made for RGGI on just the narrow basis of economic impacts on state electricity economy. However, I hope that in your fiduciary responsibilities you would consider a much broader view of cost/benefit.

As a physician, I have seen firsthand not only how our several crises have converged, but so

have the solutions. Exposure to air pollution increases the incidence of heart and lung disease and it also increases the Covid death rate. Communities of color and low-income wage earners have greater exposure to air pollution. Reduction in use of fossil fuels is the single most important thing we can do to reduce the costs of health care for all while simultaneously addressing environmental and health inequities.

Adoption of RGGI would reduce power plant emissions of nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide. According to EPA models, the improved air quality would result, by 2030, in the avoidance of between \$3 - 6 billion in health care expenditures. Those expenditures reflect 45,000 fewer children with asthma, 83,000 fewer lost work-days, 639 avoided premature deaths.¹

As impressive as they are, these statistics all underestimate the health co-benefits of RGGI because the models do not take into consideration the impact of particulate matter exposure or the secondary impacts of stress, mental illness, and loss of insurance due to illness and disability. Furthermore, they do not consider the compounding effects of the health impacts of fracking, mining, and climate change itself, all of which will be favorably impacted by RGGI. EPA models tell us that a mere 15% reduction in use of fossil fuels for electricity could save Pennsylvanians over a \$1 billion/year in health costs.² RGGI will move us in that direction.

When the opponents of RGGI ask you to think of the workers who may be negatively impacted by a change in the economy, our response should be to protect those people and communities by strengthening our support systems and targeting the money raised by sale of carbon credits, not by abandoning the greater good. Think of the impact on quality of life for the child with asthma who, because you voted for RGGI, won't be needing frequent ER visits. Think of not only those who will avoid serious illness, think also of the benefit to their families, employers, employees. Think of the quality of life for our grandchildren who may be condemned to live in a less hospitable world if climate change is not aggressively addressed.

Robert F. Kennedy once said that "the GNP includes the value of the steel in our jails cells but not the joy in our children's play." The direct economic benefits of RGGI are important and justify its approval, but there is so much more at stake than just the energy economy.

Thank you

Richard Tolin, MD

References:

1. files.dep.state.pa.us/Air/AirQuality/AQPortalFiles/RGGI/RGGI_101-20200806.mp4
2. EPA Webinar "Quantifying Health Benefits of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy" (<https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/webinar-quantifying-health-benefits-energy-efficiency-renewable-energy>)

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

Jessica Shirley
Director, Office of Policy
PA Department of Environmental Protection
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 2063
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063
Office: 717-783-8727

Fax: 717-783-8926
ecomment@pa.gov