



Anya Tewari
tuj68187@temple.edu
(732) 768-9983
1717 n 12 St
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

Good afternoon, my name is Anya Tewari and I am speaking today on behalf of myself as a private citizen. I currently live in Philadelphia, but I still visit my family in India as often as I can. I have seen first hand how climate change is already starting to take effect in those areas, by changing weather patterns, causing more extreme monsoons and floods which destroy crops and people's homes. It is very apparent that we are having a climate crisis right now, and need to take immediate action to combat and mitigate the effects however we can.

I am here today to give testimony on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ruling. I believe that Pennsylvania should participate in RGGI for the good of the climate and its citizens. Joining RGGI is key to Pennsylvania lowering pollution, fighting climate change, and providing a better quality of life for Pennsylvanians today. Multiple analyses have shown that this state has the fifth dirtiest power sector in the nation, and that joining RGGI would provide benefits such as tackling emissions, generating economic growth, saving consumers money, and improving public health.

First of all, Joining RGGI would ensure a 25% carbon pollution reduction from 2022-2030 in Pennsylvania's power sector. Without RGGI, Pennsylvania's carbon emissions are projected to increase by the middle of this decade. Immediate action is critical to help the state achieve its greenhouse gas emissions targets.

Economically speaking, participation in RGGI will result in an increase of jobs in Pennsylvania and add \$1.9 billion to the Gross State Product. According to reports released by the Wolf administration in August 2020, the energy sector provided 269,031 jobs, or 4.5 percent of the overall statewide workforce, as of the last quarter of 2019. *The clean energy sector showed an average job growth rate of 8.7 percent, or nearly double that, adding 7,794 jobs in 2017-2019.* Market forces suggest that natural gas will

continue to replace coal as a low-cost energy source into the next decade. RGGI can help make sure that we continue to reduce emissions while increasing the creation of clean-energy jobs. RGGI can lead to an expansion of the state's 90,000+ clean energy jobs(2019 data), which have grown to *outnumber* those in the fossil fuel industry, and position the state as a leader in the clean energy economy.

Aside from job creation, it would also save consumers money. Current data from states already participating in the program suggest that the average residential electricity bill in RGGI states will be 35% lower in 2031 than it was in 2017. This would place PA on a path to having a cleaner and healthier economy.

Additionally, participation in RGGI could generate massive health benefits for Pennsylvanians. As pollution from power plants has gone down, residents in the Northeast are now experiencing significantly fewer premature deaths, heart attacks and respiratory illnesses.

I hope these facts prove to you that Pennsylvania would see numerous benefits from participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and should do so immediately. From my own experience, I can tell you that climate change is real, and we are seeing the effects of this crisis right now. RGGI is a flexible and proven cap-and-invest program that would allow the state to reduce carbon emissions from the power sector in a simple, cost-effective way. There is no reason we should oppose a program that would only reduce emissions, stimulate the economy, create jobs, and benefit the health of PA's citizens. Again, I believe it is in the best interest of everyone that the DEP move deliberately and quickly on the RGGI rule in the interest of real and meaningful climate action.

Thank you for your time.