



Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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Distinguished panel members, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Dr. Cathy Chamblee and I live in Springfield, Delaware County. My family and I moved to Pennsylvania twenty years ago, amazed by the beauty of the area that greeted us. Our neighborhood was full of old growth trees: some were here when William Penn arrived! I helped neighbors plant trees during our township's environmental initiatives, and I helped keep the Chester-Ridley-Crum Creek watershed clean through local creek clean-up days.

But this home has changed over twenty years. Our state emitted more carbon pollution in 2015 than 172 of 194 Paris Climate Agreement member nations.¹ In this metro area, 79% of carbon emissions come from industrial users and the electricity that powers them.² Every single county in the Philadelphia area has received an 'F' on the American Lung Association's 2020 State of the Air Report for unhealthy ozone levels--all due to greenhouse gases.³ We are **nationally** ranked fourth for asthma-related ER visits and death rates, **particularly for people of color**.⁴ And for me, it's not even a ten-minute drive to find neighborhoods in economic distress: fully 33% of Philadelphians struggle to pay their utility bills.⁵

In my past, I have helped to protect Pennsylvania's trees and waterways. Today I am here to protect her air by speaking in support of Pennsylvania joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Participating RGGI states have cut their carbon pollution **nearly in half**, far surpassing the rest of the country by 90%.⁶ RGGI has created a net economic benefit of \$4.3 billion to its member states as well as 45,000 new job-years of work.⁷ And it has grown participating states' economies 31% faster than non-RGGI states.⁸ The cleaner air in participating states resulted in \$6 billion in saved health care costs alone between 2009-2014.⁹ Investments from RGGI have resulted in renewal energy measures, climate protection programs, and energy bill assistance to struggling residents.¹⁰ Pennsylvania's participation could **double RGGI's environmental benefits** simply because our power sector is so large, reducing power-sector carbon pollution by at least 30% by 2030.¹¹

I close by asking you to forget for a moment your official capacity in these hearings. If you are a person of faith, as I am, I ask you to consider how joining RGGI is a chance to live out your faith. Faith traditions teach the importance of loving one's neighbor. But how can I say I love my neighbor when I **knowingly allow** the air he breathes to cause him relentless asthma attacks that imperil his life? And how can I expect to share God's light and warmth with my neighbor when I know she lives in cold and darkness because she cannot afford her utility bill? **Loving our neighbors not only means caring for their souls: it means caring for their air, water, and land.** Joining RGGI is a huge opportunity to do the right thing in several ways **for the neighbors we say we care about.** We are not absolved of our responsibility to act simply because other states are not yet doing so.

Remember this quote from Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*: "What is essential is invisible to the eyes." Let's take care of our air—that "invisible essential" on which every living thing depends. Let's join RGGI.

¹ Tom Schuster, "Pennsylvania's Participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Would be a Game-Changer," entry posted March 11, 2020, <https://www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/blog/2020/03/pennsylvanias-participation-regional-greenhouse-gas-initiative-would-be> [accessed November 24, 2020].

² City of Philadelphia Office of Sustainability, James Kenney, Mayor, "Powering Our Future: A Clean Energy Vision for Philadelphia," <https://www.phila.gov/media/20180821150658/Powering-Our-Future-Full-Report.pdf> [accessed November 22, 2020].

³ American Lung Association, State of the Air Report, April 21, 2020, <https://www.stateoftheair.org/city-rankings/states/pennsylvania/> [accessed November 23, 2020].

⁴ Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, "The Top 20 Most Challenging Places to Live with Asthma," <https://www.aafa.org/asthma-capitals/> [accessed November 23, 2020].

⁵ "Powering Our Future," *ibid.*

⁶ Tom Schuster, “RGGI Will Protect Pennsylvania for Years to Come,” entry posted June 5, 2020, <https://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/Op-Ed/2020/06/05/Thomas-Schuster-RGGI-will-protect-Pennsylvania-for-years-to-come/stories/202006050039> [accessed November 23, 2020]. Also see The Acadia Center, “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> [accessed 11/27/20].

⁷ Bruce Ho, “The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is an Innovative Program,” <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/bruce-ho/key-takeaways-latest-rggi-investment-report> [accessed 11/27/20]. See also ABT Associates, “The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Analysis,” <https://www.abtassociates.com/rggi> [accessed 11/27/20]; and The Analysis Group, “The Economic Impacts of The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States,” https://www.analysisgroup.com/globalassets/uploadedfiles/content/insights/publishing/analysis_group_rggi_report_april_2018.pdf [accessed 11/27/20].

⁸ Acadia Center, “[RGGI] 10 Years in Review,” *ibid.*

⁹ ABT Associates, “[RGGI] Analysis,” *ibid.*

¹⁰ Bruce Ho, “New Reports Show RGGI Protects Kids’ Health and Saves Money,” entry posted July 29, 2020, <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/bruce-ho/new-reports-show-rggi-protects-kids-health-and-saves-money> [accessed 11/27/20].

¹¹ Schuster, “Pennsylvania’s Participation,” *ibid.*