



“Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation”
Danette Richards
416 Johnson Road
Horsham, Pa. 19044
Daller614@gmail.com
Private Citizen

My name is Danette Richards and I have lived in Pa. all my life. I would like to start by stating the Environmental Amendment to our state constitution. The Environmental Rights Amendment (ERA), (Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution), states: The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.

I grew up in Northern pa. and lived through the Agnes Flood and underground coal fires. Maybe they are reasons why I am here testifying today. I had an introduction to the power of the environment early in my life and I have never forgotten. As an adult I live in Southeastern Pa. I have always had a love of the outdoors and have been an avid vegetable gardener. I have also been an educator and retired several years ago. I have lived in Horsham, Montgomery County and have been impacted by the PFAS contamination at the near by base. That has certainly motivated me to once again look at our environment and the man made problems we are creating resulting in illnesses and major property damage.

That being said, **sadly**, as I was putting together my thoughts for today’s testimony, I was notified of severe weather in my hometown and my daughter was warned of a potential tornado near her home. One did touch down with winds approximately 75 miles per hour which caused much damage. A tornado at the end of Nov. almost Dec? Besides that, very recently there were tornados a few months past in Doylestown and one in Newton Bucks County. I think we all know what is happening. I

can't remember this kind of severe weather being so common place near me.

I have been a vegetable gardener for about 30 years. I have seen changes in the timeline a garden can be planted and in the weeks you can still expect vegetables from your garden. I believe I read recently that my area of Pa will have temps more in line with some southern states due to Climate Change. I honestly can't believe this nor do I want this to be the case. I remember cold winter weather growing up as a kid in Northern Pa. It was fun to build igloos and have snowball fights. Even though, we never did consistently have that kind of winter here in southern pa, the last few years you can get along without a heavier winter coat.

It saddens me that there are climate deniers out there that choose not to believe or for maybe political or financial reasons choose not to believe in science. This is confusing to me. I recently read the book A TRIUMPH OF DOUBT BY DAVID MICHAELS. It really highlights the extent corporations or politicians have gone to raise uncertainty in people's minds about things that can hurt them.....like smoking....it took a long time to get that warning label on cigarettes. It seems that for years there has been a concerted effort to steer people away from the truth about various scientific realities. I fear that if we don't acknowledge and act on what we know to be true that the future for our children and their children will be bleak. This denial has taken a life of its own.

One thing I do know, young people get that we are at a crossroads and honestly no action is seen by them as not caring for either their physical or mental health. I hear these perspectives from my own children. I have heard young people say, "why should i have children, the earth will be so messed up."

I have volunteered with CEET, the Center for Excellence in Environmental Toxicology out of the University of Penn. I was part of a program to help bring awareness to the air quality in and around Philadelphia Public Schools. Many inner city children have asthma and have more difficult problems when the weather gets hotter and stagnates. Philadelphia, for instance, has 2-3 times higher asthma rates than the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Coming as no surprise there is the relationship of unhealthy air and the Pandemic. This was recently highlighted in a study out of the University of Geneva. They did a study.....

Their results, published in the journal *Earth Systems and Environment*, found this as well.

So why RGGI???? Based upon what I have just shared...RGGI will help to clean our air and lessen the fine particles that are circulating in our environment. During this pandemic it has been noted that the air quality has been better since fewer cars have been on the road. Why can't that be our everyday reality????

Pa has an opportunity to be a leader and an example.

A new study as of feb. 2020 by MIT has found that Pennsylvania leads the nation in premature deaths caused by air pollution per capita. The dirty air and CO2 is the problem.

(Published Feb. 12 by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the study concluded that air pollution caused more than 4,800 Pennsylvanians to die prematurely in 2018. Pennsylvania came in 3rd largest amount of premature deaths caused by air pollution, but had the highest rates of premature deaths per resident.

(Deaths are qualified as "premature" if they occur before an individual reaches the average age of death in their population. Pennsylvania already has lower than average life expectancy, at 78.5 years, which is 29th place among the states.)

"The overarching theme that needs to be stressed here is that we need to make health central in our thinking. Dr. Renee N. Salas, "Climate action is a prescription for health."

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.