



Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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On behalf of the Environmental Justice Team of the Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA

Thank you for the chance to provide my perspective on Pennsylvania's opportunity to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)—and thereby join a growing consortium of states determined to be part of a solution to the Climate Change crisis that faces our state, our country, and our planet.

I come to this meeting to provide testimony as a citizen of Pennsylvania, a daughter, mother, aunt, sister, wife, and friend. I speak on behalf of the Environmental Justice team of the Main Line Unitarian Church, supported by UUJusticePA and a growing group of faith-based organizations that are part of Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light. As an environmental advocate, I've spent a good deal of time reading and learning about our current climate crisis, about pollution in our air and water, about RGGI: its formation, goals, and early successes in the states that have signed on. We are fortunate to have a lot of scientific and economic evidence in hand from states who have been early leaders in RGGI, where progress to reduce destructive emissions has been made and economies have actually been strengthened. I trust that many people will share those details in upcoming testimony.

The primary testimony I want to provide here is the moral, faith-based voice, which is growing in this state and across this country. This voice demands that we look at the dire environmental situation we face—one that human beings have wittingly and unwittingly had a big hand in creating. It demands that we acknowledge where we are, the consequences we are already seeing across this planet, and the harsh reality that our children, grandchildren, and generations that follow will increasingly bear, if we do nothing. It is a voice that calls us all to action.

I'll be honest, I don't really want to co-chair my church's Environmental Justice team, I would rather be out biking. But I cannot bear witness to the degradation of this planet, to the disproportionate suffering that pollution and climate change especially cause poor and disenfranchised people, and look away. Genuine faith, in whatever place we find it, calls us to bear witness, and to act with and for each other—while there is still time.

So why are we even here, weighing the sides of positive action and inaction? For too long, we've framed this issue as one of either/or: either we have Environmental Justice, or we have

Jobs for Pennsylvanians. I've seen it in action in Harrisburg, when, after a rally I attended with environmentalists, I watched as a group of men rallied to stop our "agenda" and keep their jobs. And I feel for these men—and for their wives and children, their fears and hopes for a good life.

As a Unitarian, I study the wisdom of many religious traditions. The Buddhists have a term, Right Livelihood. It means, meaningful work with minimal harm to others. Once upon a time we may have believed that work in coal, oil and gas was Right Livelihood, but we know too much about the pollution caused to workers and neighboring communities, and greenhouse gas emissions that are affecting the entire planet, to believe that anymore. As people of faith, we cannot pretend. We need to act to make changes, with courage and with compassion. We need the best of the polarities, Environmental Justice AND Meaningful Livelihoods, and we need to bring all our resources to bear as we transition to a just future economy, one where government, businesses, and our educational system, work together for all.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative isn't a solution, but it's a great step towards the emissions drawdown that we owe to our loved ones and to future generations. Thankfully, we already know it works: nine other states have joined since 2009, enjoying economic growth, not loss, outpacing the rest of the US by 31%, while carbon emissions by their power plants have fallen by 47%. Those states are looking to the future we all deserve to have, where polluters, not citizens, pay their fair share, and green energy businesses get a leg up.

Imagine a Pennsylvania where we focus on jobs for the future—not the past—and prioritize the health of our children and generations to come. Let's do more than imagine, let's all do our part to make it happen. Thank you.