



## RGGI INITIATIVE COMMENT TO THE THE PA. DEP

My name is Sharon Furlongof Feasterville, Pennsylvania. I am the Spokesperson for Bucks Environmental Action, an environmental watchdog group of citizens and group leaders interested in trying to clean up our State, our Region and our Planet.

The proposal to become one of the participants in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a fine and forward looking proposal indeed. We live in a state that has the dubious distinction of being the third largest producer of carbon-based pollution. We also contribute 1% of the world's methane pollution. Therefore, we see this proposal as a step in the right direction to change those unfortunate facts.

But these pollution facts are not dry, academic types of facts. No, being an emitter of pollution in these proportions means these facts are deadly because public health gets trounced....more asthma, more respiratory distress disorders, more hospital trips. Were we to join this Initiative and it was to work in the same way it has worked in 10 other states, than we might have more than 180 million tons of pollution removed in less than 9 years. In a DEP analysis, such a reduction could produce \$6.3 Billion in health care savings alone because there would probably be 45,000 fewer asthma attacks with 30,000 fewer hospital visits. And that is just one aspect of public health affected by pollution and climate change. There are other aspects that are directly related to rising temperatures and increased storm activity of climate disruption, including exploding rates of infection from tick-borne diseases and greater numbers of people suffering from heat-related conditions that can lead to death. In addition, improved cardiovascular health seems to go along with reductions in pollution levels.....a fine incentive indeed to join RGGI.

But maybe there needs to be more incentives laid out before you? Okay, how about the \$3 Billion raised where RGGI has been already established.....money that could be used to fund research, mitigate health problems, quicken energy transition, and create training and support programs for workers in the declining fossil fuels industry? Or being able to give these same training programs to others who have not had the opportunity to enter such programs because of educational lacks, institutional racism and deep poverty? And how does 27,000 new, decent paying Pennsylvania jobs sound, on top of the more than 85,000 already created from the solar industry alone ? Or the potential to add \$1.9 Billion to the Pennsylvania economy? Isn't all of this attractive? Isn't all of this exciting?

But there is even more to lay at your feet. Two recent polls show that close to 80% of the residents of Pennsylvania support placing a limit on carbon pollution from power plants and indicate they will support lawmakers who take action on climate change initiatives. Many in the business community say likewise.

Already our heat days have increased dramatically and this affects all people, all farmers, all workers whose jobs are in the out of doors, our trees, our plants, our non human beings, and even our soils. We cannot afford to let this climate crisis go unchallenged as we have been for too many years. We must take significant action to try to prevent worse damages from accelerating destructive changes. Joining RGGI seems like an obvious way to begin this battle which truly is the battle for our lives. Thank You.