



## Stephen Hoffman

---

**From:** ecomment@pa.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 3:07 PM  
**To:** Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; IRRC; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; regcomments@pa.gov; ntroutman@pasen.gov; timothy.collins@pasenate.com; gking@pahousegop.com  
**Cc:** c-jflanagan@pa.gov  
**Subject:** Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

**CAUTION: \*\*EXTERNAL SENDER\*\*** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.



The enclosed comment was received as part of the following testimony:

**Testimony name:** Public Hearing 3 (1pm) - #7-559  
**Testimony date:** 12/9/2020 12:00:00 AM  
**Testimony location:** WebEx

### Re: eComment System

**The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559).**

Commenter Information:

Anisa George  
 (anisageorge@gmail.com)  
 1232 Reed St  
 Philadelphia, PA 19147 US

Comments entered:

Hello, my name is Anisa George. In way of introduction, I was born in the shadow of Bethlehem Steel, I moved to the rural crop lands of Nazareth, PA when I was fifteen, and I am now a writer living in South Philadelphia.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and thank you for listening.

I want to start by speaking about my daughter's asthma. She had her first attack shortly after she turned one. She was having so much trouble breathing she was starting to lose consciousness in my arms as my husband and I rushed her to the ER. I remember it was the day before Christmas Eve. At this time she was so young she only knew how to say a handful of words, and always did so only one word at a time. She could say simple things like "mama," "papa," "no," "more" and about thirty different animal sounds like "moo." But as the doctors in the ER rushed to get her hooked up to an oxygen supply and to insert an IV into her teeny tiny

vein, she looked at her father and I with fear and trembling in her eyes and for the first time put two words together. "All done," she begged. "All done?" And as we struggled to help her to remain calm, to explain that the doctors were here to help her breath, she formed her second complete sentence — "I don't know. I don't know."

I tell you this story because I know my family is only one of thousands of families that suffer every day in this state because of climate accelerated asthma. Philadelphia has been ranked "the fourth most challenging place in the US to live" by the Asthma Allergy Foundation of America. The foundation lists poor air quality and high ozone as the leading causes behind this ranking. So it is clear to me that the climate crisis is not in the future or even on the horizon—it is right here, right now. It is in our communities, causing undue suffering every day.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes says we have about a decade to solve the climate crisis. There are only two ways to manage it; mitigation, that is reducing the amount of new emissions into the atmosphere, and sequestration, that is removing past emissions that are already in the atmosphere and storing them back in the soil where they came from. We are past the point where mitigation alone can reverse climate change. We need to remove carbon as well.

So yes RGGI is a good first step. Let's absolutely do it. But how is Pennsylvania going to invest the money from the allowance auctions? What are the investments that can be made that can really tackle the scope of this problem?

My proposal to you all today is that one answer, and perhaps the best one, is regenerative organic agriculture. Let's pay farmers to farm in a way that puts carbon back into the soil through accessible techniques like managed grazing, no or low till, cover crops, composting, etc. Data from farming and grazing studies by the Pennsylvania based Rodale Institute show the power of exemplary regenerative systems, if achieved globally, could draw down as much as 100% of past annual CO2 emissions. More than 100%! Let's take a moment to let that sink in. And we can do this carbon sequestration while building our eroded soils, strengthening the nutritional density of our yield, boosting the health of our citizens, increasing biodiversity, reducing floods, and purifying our watershed. What could be a better investment? This is a win, win, win proposition—a solution with innumerable silver linings.

To do this we need to completely rewrite current subsidies. Instead of providing grants and loans to an agriculture that is corrosive, that jeopardizes the lives of current and future generations, let's start, instead, to incentivize farmers who are willing to pursue a regenerative organic approach.

Since I only have five minutes to speak, I will refer you again to the research of the Rodale Institute, as well as to a book by Eric Toensmeier called *The Carbon Farming Solution*, to the Hudson Carbon Project, a documentary called *Kiss the Ground*, and most of all to the traditions of the original stewards of this land, the Leni Lenape and the other unseated tribal people of this state whose entire culture is rooted in the foundational principles of regenerative agriculture.

We have all the technology and resources we need to keep our planet a livable one. Please bring RGGI to Pennsylvania and please use RGGI to propel us into a carbon negative economy so that the generations now being born do not look upon ours with pain and fear in their faces as my own child has already done, so they do not look to us and ask, "All done? All done? All done?"

---

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Shirley

---

Jessica Shirley  
Director, Office of Policy  
PA Department of Environmental Protection  
Rachel Carson State Office Building  
P.O. Box 2063  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063  
Office: 717-783-8727  
Fax: 717-783-8926  
ecomment@pa.gov