



“Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation”

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Good afternoon, my name is Carolyn Schellhorn and I live in Ardmore. I speak today as a parent and as a community member. I have decided to testify to share with you my deep concerns about accelerating climate change and the importance of timely and effective action to mitigate it. The *timing* of climate action matters because scientists tell us that the planetary processes that have been set in motion by our actions may trigger tipping points, which may lead to *irreversible* changes to climate patterns and ecosystems. This is a crisis that threatens our lives and health. We knew this a long time ago and we should have acted then. We cannot turn back the clock, but we can act now.

Human-induced climate change is a global problem, but we here in Pennsylvania share a significant part of the responsibility for this because our state emits more greenhouse gas emissions than most nations, and our electricity sector is a major source. To avert the worst consequences of climate change we must cut greenhouse gas emissions significantly and quickly -- 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050 – and that means leaving fossil fuels in the ground.

Joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is an effective step on the road to a net-zero carbon economy. The RGGI Regulation sets limits on carbon emissions from power plants that reduce the allowed emissions over time. States auction off allowances that are purchased by power plants. So power plants effectively pay for the pollution and global warming they create.

The revenue the states receive can be reinvested in communities to address inequities. Some social groups and communities are much more exposed to pollution and the increased frequency of severe weather events created by our consumption of fossil fuels than others, and they suffer more from the associated health problems. Also, some people will face greater economic and employment risks during our transition away from fossil fuels. The revenue from RGGI can help address some of this injustice.

The states that have been participating in the RGGI over the past decade have been able to significantly cut pollution and ghg emissions while their economies have continued to grow. The revenue generated from the initiative has resulted in thousands of new clean energy jobs, investments in energy efficiency, consumer savings, and assistance with retraining workers to help with the transition. All these are benefits that Pennsylvanians can enjoy as well. Perhaps most importantly -- concerning our health -- by reducing the pollutants in the air we breathe, we reduce asthma, other respiratory issues, cardiac problems, cancer risks, and medical bills.

When it comes to supporting and securing our lives and health, there are few actions we can take that are as impactful as joining the RGGI and responsibly investing the proceeds.