



Stephen Hoffman

From: ecomment@pa.gov
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 3:07 PM
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Cc: c-jflanaga@pa.gov
Subject: Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

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

Testimony name: Public Hearing 4 (6pm) - #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:

Elisa McCool
 (mccolel@gmail.com)
 4916 Sansom St
 Philadelphia, PA 19139 US

Comments entered:

Good evening,

My name is Elisa McCool, and I am a resident of Philadelphia, PA. I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony at this public hearing.

I have been concerned about climate change for a long time, but about 8 years ago, I started to read more about climate change, and the more I learned, the more alarmed I became. I once saw climate change as a tough problem that needed to be addressed and could be addressed, but the more I read about what climate scientists were really saying about the scope and speed of the climate emergency, the more I felt myself sinking into despair about our collective future. I became one of the growing number of people who seriously question the idea of whether or not to have children given the threats of climate disaster and the large carbon footprint of each person who lives in the U.S. I hated feeling this despair, and yet I think that I needed to start

fully facing up to the scale of the emergency in order to gather the strength I needed to really get in this fight against climate change.

Although the path towards mitigating the worst effects of climate change is filled with obstacles, I began to see that those of us living now, and particularly those of us with power to influence policies and regulations, have a moral responsibility to take action. Joining RGGI is one necessary step that Pennsylvania can take to move our region towards a better future. But in order to make sure that RGGI actually creates a more just and livable future, it will have to be implemented carefully with an explicit focus on using the rules to repair past harms and increase equity.

In addition to growing more alarmed the more I read about climate change, I also began to learn more about environmental racism and the unequal impacts of climate change. As a white person, I believe it is the responsibility of myself and other white people to take action to eliminate structural racism and to work towards repairing its past and current harms. Also, as a Jew, I feel that I have a moral obligation to pursue racial and economic justice alongside stewardship of the Earth. Taking a stand for environmental justice is essential. RGGI is important, but we must implement RGGI in such a way that it creates a more equitable future for all Pennsylvanians; we cannot allow it to be implemented in such a way that it leads to further racial injustice.

Therefore, I am asking the Environmental Quality Board to do the following things:

First, the rules for RGGI should be written to ensure that communities that have been disproportionately harmed by pollution in our state, which are frequently communities of color, will gain environmental, health, and economic benefits from RGGI. In addition, the residents of these communities must play a central role in determining how their communities should benefit.

Secondly, we cannot allow "hot spots" of pollution to be created or intensified as a result of the way emission allowances are distributed. As our statewide emissions decrease, we must make sure that emissions do not increase in certain communities that have already been disproportionately impacted.

And lastly, the funds generated from RGGI should go into the Clean Air Fund, not the General Fund, and more specifically, they should be used for projects that will benefit Environmental Justice communities. Such projects could include providing utility credits if costs for utilities rise under RGGI, creating more solar power infrastructure, funding for home weatherization and energy efficiency, lead removal and remediation of toxic sites, and the creation of more green space and green stormwater management.

Pennsylvania needs a more equitable, livable future for all; please craft rules for RGGI that will further these aims. Thank you for your time.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

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