



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)

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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:

Elizabeth Brunton
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915 West Marshall St
Norristown, PA 19401 US

Comments entered:

Good evening. My name is Liz Brunton, and I am lifelong Pennsylvania resident, residing in Norristown for the last 35 years. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony at this virtual public hearing. The focus of my testimony will come from my experience as a grandchild of lifelong coal region folk, and my fervent belief in the new green economy and the future of Pennsylvania and the Northeastern region of the United States.

Growing up, at least twice a quarter my family would drive the 2 and a half hours from Glenside to Ashland to visit with my retired coal miner Granddad. He and my grandmother lived two blocks from the Ashland mine which, at that time, had been converted into a tourist attraction with modest success. The ride through coal country, with the mountainous piles of shale waste, and the dying or dead towns with life only showing in tiny strip malls and diners, was increasingly depressing as the years marched on. It was clear to this young person that coal was dying and taking the towns along with it. People my age graduated school and left town the next

day, heading for college or jobs elsewhere, finding none in their town. Businesses once thriving on Main Street either found a way to move into the strips or closed up shop. A few miles up the ridge would bring you to Centralia – still famously burning underground. It took a lot of convincing to calm me down that the fire could not possibly travel down to my grandparent’s modest house, maintained by Grandad’s Black Lung insurance payments.

There is now no dispute that the few remaining coal plants in Pennsylvania are in their final death throws. And are increasingly uneconomical to boot. Thanks to market forces driven by cheaper gas and renewables, 18 coal-fired plants in PA have already closed or transitioned to gas in recent years. There are no plans on the table to build more. Coal’s share of the state’s energy production has dropped from 55% to 17% since 2005, while the market share for natural gas has increased.

That is why Pennsylvania must plan for the transition that is already happening, and to prepare Pennsylvania workers for the energy jobs of the future. And to bring Pennsylvania into that future by ensuring we meet the constitutional mandate of a livable planet with clean air and pure water.

During the past 10 years, since its inception and adoption in all our neighboring states, RGGI states saw 31% more overall economic growth than states that do not regulate carbon emissions. So RGGI is not a job killer! A Just Transition does not mean fewer jobs, in fact just the reverse. RGGI is projected to create 27,000 Pennsylvania jobs and boost the economy by nearly \$2 billion between now and 2030. A Just Transition for all is possible for us, especially if practical efforts are baked into the rulemaking.

I am championing a just transition for workers in the extractive energy economy towards short and long-term jobs that provide living wages for families, ensure retirement pensions, and create dignified working conditions. And a just transition for communities that have relied on fossil fuel extraction for revenue to support public services such as good schools and the local economy. Job training, placement programs and the like can be fed by RGGI funds to ensure these folks transition successfully to the new green economy, and ensure pension and healthcare guarantees, and investment in support of regenerative energy or sustainable business in the community, and shore up lost tax revenue from power plant closures.

It is critical that Pennsylvania steps forward to join our sister states who are already reaping the benefits of the RGGI program with cleaner air, clearer water, and renewed purpose of living into the future. The world of my grandparents is long gone. Don’t leave us behind with those ghosts of the past. Please help my child, and the millions of children who come after us, thrive and prosper in a renewed green world.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

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Director, Office of Policy

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