



My name is Mark Bortman. My wife, two children and I live at 1655 Fairfield Rd., Yardley, PA. I am testifying today to express our support for the proposal for Pennsylvania to take part in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) that will help to cut climate change pollution from electric power plants.

As a boy growing up during the oil shocks of the 1970's, I came to appreciate the economic benefits of energy efficiency – a programmable thermostat, solar water heater and well insulated home were worthwhile investments. I could never understand how others could waste their money by wasting energy. This was before the dangers of climate change, even, were widely known. It was clear from just an economic standpoint that saving energy was a smart investment.

Now, more than 40 years later, those lesson are even more important. As we have seen the climate change and the destructive technologies of fracking and mountaintop coal removal accelerate environmental degradation, the rapid implementation of common-sense measures is now more important than ever.

With that said, I am here today to make the case that joining RGGI makes sense economically, as well as environmentally.

I'm sure other speakers at these hearings will decry the cost of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative saying it is too expensive and will place an undue burden on the citizens and businesses of Pennsylvania. I would like to point out two great fallacies of that argument.

First, although there are costs associated with RGGI, the far greater costs come from continuing with the status quo. The damage done by heat waves, intensified storms, increased allergies, destructive insects, asthma and other respiratory ailments, and other effects of continued use of highly polluting forms of energy is estimated to be 40 times higher than the full cost of switching 100% to non-polluting, renewable energy. So, the real cost to us is in NOT joining RGGI. Unfortunately, those most effected and at risk to this damage are the ones with the least political power to be able to institute meaningful changes.

My second rebuttal to their argument regards to the great returns on investment we will see from the money that goes to the state through the RGGI program. These monies will be invested in jobs and industries in our state and will lead to economic growth and savings for the people and companies in Pennsylvania. It is not often in life that you can find a win-win solution. With renewable energy, however, you get not just a win-win, you get a win-win-win. Good, high-paying, steady, not-able-to-be-outsourced jobs are created by installing renewable energy in the state. Last year (the latest year data is available), the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries employed almost 100,000 people.

These are high paying, rewarding jobs. I know, I have one of them installing solar panels. This industry will only continue to grow. The second win is that our customers save money. By investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency, people are able to lower their energy costs. That means households and businesses can free up money in their budgets for other important expenses. The third win are the environmental benefits that are readily obvious. Renewable energy is everything that fossil fuels are not – no smog and other pollution that hurts our lungs, no mining that ruins our wilderness areas, no fracking poisoning our ground water and no carbon emissions. Do you know what it is called when there is a spill of solar energy? A sunny day. That is an old saying but will forever be true.

Now, however, we are already seeing the effects of climate change. Storms are becoming stronger and more numerous. Heat waves, droughts, wildfires, allergies, hurricanes, insect infestations and more are going to continue to gain in intensity and frequency. RGGI has delivered significant benefits in the states where it already operates: job creation, consumer energy savings, cleaner air, and better health and more. We owe the people of Pennsylvania the same opportunities.

The renewable energy train has left the station. We should be clearing obstacles out of its path so it can pick up speed, rather than try to create barriers, as we rush to a cleaner tomorrow. I appreciate the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter. Thank you very much.