



Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)
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I'd like to thank the Environmental Quality Board for holding this hearing giving citizens the opportunity to speak.

Pennsylvania should join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative RGGI because it is time to clean up our act and protect our citizens.

First, as the third largest greenhouse gas polluting state, we have a huge responsibility for global climate change.

We must transition away from digging up and burning fossil fuels for energy and to make plastic.

This will not happen without strong and decisive action from our state leaders.

Joining RGGI is just the beginning.

I live near the Cheswick coal fired power plant -- one of the biggest sources of pollution in Allegheny County and the Pittsburgh region.

It is the largest emitter of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, lead and mercury in the county.

And in the top five for benzene and carbon monoxide.

In 2018 I attended a public hearing on this plant at Springdale High School – Springdale being the birthplace of Rachel Carson.

I was shocked to see that this school, high on a hill above the Allegheny River, was at about the same height as the smokestacks of the Cheswick plant.

If the plant is operating on a day when the wind is blowing in the wrong direction – it will blow right into the high school where young children are learning.

The plant leaves a residue of soot on and inside homes in the area.

To quote a resident who looks out her window at the plant:

"It's like hell. Living in hell.

It's filthy; it's dirty; it's noisy — it's unhealthy."

Endquote

We pay a lot – an awful lot in health costs from these toxic industries.

I am also a cancer survivor – surviving multiple bouts with lymphoma, as well as thyroid nodules and breast cancer.

There is no doubt my environment was at least partly responsible for my health issues.

My mother and aunt died of a brain tumors at age 58 and 60 after growing up on a coal seam in Fayette County.

Pennsylvania needs a shift in our collective mindset around what smart and sustainable economic development looks like.

REGGI can help us loosen the grip that the oil and gas industry has on our state.

But we need more.

Let's work to end fossil fuel subsidies;
Such as the 1.6 Billion given to Shell to build a toxic petrochemical plastic factory with infrastructure that emits not only greenhouse gasses but VOCs and radioactive material.

Let's shift subsidies to energy efficient retrofits for commercial and residential buildings;

Invest in projects that will benefit the public such as zero-pollution electric generation from solar and wind, and passenger rail and public transit infrastructure;

Let's transition coal and gas workers to family-sustaining jobs that don't harm workers or their families.

Let's pay special attention to environmental justice areas and give leaders in low-income areas and communities of color a seat at the table to define the economic development projects those communities want.

REGGI is not perfect – but it will help ensure that communities in southwestern Pennsylvania are no longer sacrifice zones for coal, oil and gas to exploit long-dead fossils for dirty energy.

And perhaps best of all... REGGI will help create thousands of new jobs
With an eye to the future.

I am grateful for those in Pennsylvania's leadership who have supported the effort to join RGGI.

I am excited to see how joining RGGI will improve the lives of ALL Pennsylvanians, especially those recovering from decades of environmental destruction.

Thank you