



Environmental Quality Board, Pennsylvania Department Environmental Protection

RE:

“Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation”

December 10, 2020

Thank you for this opportunity to speak today. I am in favor of Pennsylvania participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

I am a mother of six and now a grandmother. I live in Robinson Township in northern Washington County.

Pennsylvania’s participation in RGGI will bring about necessary efforts to curb carbon emissions that cause climate change through a cap and invest program. Pennsylvanian’s like me are already experiencing climate change at a local level. We have a large pond on our property and we always look forward to this Christmas-New Year holiday break for the really cold days and nights that would freeze our pond. My husband and I taught all of our children to ice-skate at a very early age. We always enjoy skating and playing hockey on the pond during this season. But those days seem to be disappearing as the weather gets warmer and warmer during the winter. Our pond is also not as full as it used to be. Warmer summers have made for dry spells that have taken a toll on our water sources.

We rely on well water as our only available source of freshwater. In recent years, we have experienced more frequent incidents of our well running dry. The warmth and dryness have also kept the tick population around us thriving. My family is very used to seeing ticks when we are out in our fields or woods, but only during tick season. However, the weather no longer gets cold enough, long enough and the ticks are actively present all year. They seem to be getting worse.

My youngest son fell severely ill in June of this year. He was diagnosed with Lyme disease. My older son’s roommate at the University of Pittsburgh was diagnosed with Lyme disease in July. We learned that Pennsylvania has the most cases of Lyme disease in the nation! This is not something to be proud of, neither is the fact that Pennsylvania has the fifth dirtiest power sector in the nation. This is due to the limitless amount of carbon dioxide being spewed into our air from coal and natural gas power plants as they generate electricity.

A proposal is currently being developed to construct a new natural gas power plant adjacent to a massive waste coal pile in my town. Pennsylvania needs to move away from these dirty fossil fuel sources. Participating in RGGI is a step in the right direction and one that should protect residents now and into the future.

I hope that my children and grandson will be able to continue to live close to me. But I am torn. Decisions made years ago in our Commonwealth have made our environment increasingly polluted. Pennsylvania's dirty power sector continues to contribute to climate change and impacts public health. My area alone is contributing to this pollution with the construction of several natural gas facilities that add to the coal power plant pollution. We see more days of drought on our farm due to the planet warming and we experience a loss of enjoyment of our pond especially during what should be cold winter days. We also are experiencing a larger than normal tick population and consequently more cases of Lyme disease from the ticks. I urge the EQB and the DEP to move deliberately and quickly on linking Pennsylvania to RGGI in order to address the climate crisis and improve public health.

Sincerely,

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