

Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation



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My name is Diane Nissen. I live in Haverford, PA. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about this very important issue.

Climate change is real and caused by human activity. I know from personal experience that the temperature in Pennsylvania has dramatically changed in the last 65 years. In 1955, my parents built a house on Lake Wallenpaupack in the Poconos. They splurged on a stone fireplace because although we only were going to spend summers there, the temperature at night often dipped into the 40's in July and August. We used that fireplace so often that we burned through three grates! Fast forward to 2005 and my parents had to install air-conditioning because the temperature at night was often in the 80's – absolutely unheard of in the 1950's and 1960's. Besides a temperature shift, there have been other negative changes. The lake now has so much algae that this year we had to stop swimming in late July because we were told there could be health risks.

So I have no doubt that climate has changed dramatically even over the last 65 years. I've seen firsthand the impacts that climate change is already causing here in Pennsylvania, and that's why I think it is critical that we join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and start taking immediate steps to reduce our impact on climate change.

RGGI has a proven track record of moving state and regional economies away from dirty fossil fuels, erratic energy prices, and antiquated power plants and toward clean technologies and innovation. Just as designed, RGGI has lowered the region's carbon emissions. RGGI has helped the 10 member states cut carbon pollution from power plants by more than half. The pollution cap is slated to decline by 2.5 percent a year through 2020 and 3 percent a year between 2021 and 2030. Because other pollutants were also reduced, RGGI created health benefits valued at \$5.7 billion. Air pollution reductions from RGGI will particularly benefit those most impacted by poor air quality, such as children, seniors, and low income and environmental justice communities.

Pennsylvania is the fourth largest greenhouse gas emitter in the country. This means we are adversely affecting the health and well being of our citizens and contributing to climate change. Many worry that cutting emissions cuts jobs, in particular coal jobs. But those jobs are disappearing with or without joining RGGI. And fracking, besides contaminating water and polluting the air, may not be viable in the future as many of those companies have filed for bankruptcy. So let's move on and away from carbon pollution. According to analysis by the state's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), joining RGGI would reduce carbon emissions in the state by an estimated 188 million tons between 2022 and 2030, decrease electricity prices, produce a net increase of more than 30,000 jobs and boost Pennsylvania's gross state product by \$19 billion. How can we not do this? I urge our state to join with the 10 states already benefiting from their membership in RGGI.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify.