



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-jflanaga@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 3 (1pm) - #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:

Hugh Taft-Morales
 Philadelphia Ethical Society (leaderhugh@phillyethics.org)
 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square
 Philadelphia, PA 19103 US

Comments entered:

My name is Hugh Taft-Morales and I serve as Clergy Leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society located on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of Pennsylvania becoming a responsible partner in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative known as "Reggie".

As clergy for a humanist denomination dedicated to living more ethical lives, I appeal to your moral conscience to seize this opportunity to do what is right. Those who resist RGGI may think the status quo is "good enough." They may believe RGGI will weigh the energy industry down with impractical carbon caps and an unreasonable timeline. Neither is true. Please do not compromise your ethical principles or our collective welfare. Don't sacrifice long-term economic growth benefiting many for short-term profit benefiting few. Don't settle for doing what is possible. I am asking you to change what is possible.

RGGI would reset how we do business in Pennsylvania. Right now, our state suffers from what ethicists call the tragedy of the commons. This term introduced nearly two centuries ago, explains that individuals acting out of narrow self-interest can gravely harm the common good by depleting shared resources. The resource we are focusing on today is a most precious and vital one: clean air. It is a fundamental part of our state's natural wealth. Let's live up to the legal and moral underpinnings of our Common-wealth.

I appeal to our regulatory and elected leaders to see how the interests of all – as individuals and as the collective – are served by protecting the shared resource of air. Let's keep our eyes on the prize by assuring that the funds raised through RGGI go to the Clean Air Fund, not to the state's general fund.

A key ethical value inherent to RGGI is equity. As we guide our state through an inevitable process of transitioning to sustainable energy, let's make sure everyone benefits. RGGI will help assure that the true costs of energy production are the responsibility of energy producers. When energy companies throw carbon into the atmosphere, while rewarding stockholders with short term profits, millions of voters pay the price. Every citizen of Pennsylvania deserves clean air, and energy company stockholders deserve long-term sustainability and clean consciences.

RGGI's commitment to a just transition to sustainable energy would benefit energy workers throughout the state adversely affected both by pollution and by the inevitable shrinking of the fossil fuels industry. The creation of green jobs would revitalize Pennsylvania's economic health and benefit unemployed citizens by adding an estimated 27,000 jobs in Pennsylvania by 2030. RGGI would help those suffering from asthma – as I do – and suffering from other respiratory challenges. RGGI would serve environmental justice by offering development opportunities to marginalized communities, as explained by the Center for Coalfield Justice. And RGGI would benefit future generations by slowing climate change. And RGGI would even benefit the energy industry by helping them focus on the long-game – assuring that energy companies don't miss out on the upcoming renewable energy boom.

Since the Environmental Rights Amendment of 1971, Pennsylvania's constitution has guaranteed that the people have a right to clean air and water. It has promised that the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic environmental resources are stewarded responsibly. Our constitution is the bridge between our ethical ideals and the practical necessities of managing our commonwealth. I am asking you to seize this historic opportunity.

Our political and regulatory leaders must be ethical leaders. Rarely has such a moral path forward been so clear. Please lead us into a sustainable future by embracing RGGI as it has been put forward by the Pennsylvania Department of the Environment.

Thank you.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

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