



Testimony for CO₂ Budget Trading Program Regulation

My name is Karen Frock. I live north of Williamsport, PA and am speaking as a property owner, business owner, and Pennsylvania native.

Breathing issues are more important now than ever. Some of the same co-morbidities helping COVID-19 kill people are directly caused or made worse by air pollution that we can reduce by joining RGGI.

Right now I am in no mood to tolerate people or regulations that look at illness, disability, and death as statistics and risk-benefit analysis.

I am in no mood for citizens or legislators who say things like wearing a mask will not completely prevent COVID-19 transmission, so why bother doing something uncomfortable that, in itself, will not completely solve the problem?

Because it will help. Because it will protect others from harm. Because we have a responsibility to step up and do whatever we can to reduce CO₂ emissions, just as we have a responsibility to reduce COVID-19 transmission.

RGGI is bigger than our Commonwealth, as the problems of climate change and public health are far bigger than any state, region, or country. RGGI demonstrates our commitment to join a patriotic effort with global impacts for good.

Advancing renewable energy and energy efficiency also creates good-paying jobs and boosts economic development. The job killing argument is the same tired, tarnished, false claim made every time we try to move forward as a nation toward new technologies. I am sure it was made as we previously destroyed large parts of the Commonwealth through extractive energy practices of the 19th and twentieth centuries.

But now we must move ahead and meet our responsibilities to create an economy that works for everybody and for the future. To create and support manufacturing technologies emerging

and already here to replace our complete dependence on fossil fuels with something sustainable. Those resources should remain untapped or be used as part of the larger picture to provide backup only during certain events – such as during a solar eclipse, when Germany needed to fall back on its power plants for a brief time – and as a national security reserve.

Natural gas power plants are not a replacement or permanent solution, because what we overlook, while we are here talking about carbon, are the cradle-to-grave impacts of natural gas extraction and the CO₂ emissions it does still generate. That will perpetuate the carbon problem while greatly exacerbating greenhouse gas emissions from methane through the entire life cycle of natural gas extraction, production, and transmission.

Natural gas also puts people, homes, and businesses at risk from faulty pipeline siting and construction and the extreme weather events caused by climate change, such as we experience here in the Loyalsock Creek valley. If this sounds extreme, I point to the Beaver County Revolution Pipeline explosion of 2018. That occurred to people living in conditions very similar to here where I live, where Pennsylvania General Energy, LLC wants to run a pipeline rim-to-rim across the steep, forested, exceptional value Loyalsock Creek valley to transport gas that may well end up being exported.

This is in a place where we have suffered increasingly frequent and catastrophic flooding as a result of climate change. It is also among the last remaining vast forested areas that have not yet been irreparably damaged by natural gas development.

So we and our lives and our futures are being put at direct risk so that legislators like Senator Gene Yaw can blatantly promote the gas industry for its supposed benefits, while ignoring the risks.

I am especially appalled at the naked bias, hostility, anti-environmental and propagandistic nature of the newsletter Senator Yaw just sent me, on the eve of my testimony, to try and discredit this very initiative and our Commonwealth's potential participation, while supposedly soliciting my comment on it. This is a tactic Senator Yaw should not be using on his constituents and reveals the arrogance of his continued attitude toward these issues.

In addition to calling RGGI “a tax scheme,” he states, “Anyone who thinks that windmills and solar panels miraculously appear on the mountainside clearly ignore and misunderstand the manufacturing process.”

Notwithstanding the grammatical error, I don’t know whom he thinks says or thinks that, but I certainly don’t. I have served manufacturing companies for more than forty years. I have helped achieve green manufacturing goals. I have helped a scientist using NOAA and NASA data to communicate reality-based, data-driven urgency about climate change to local community groups.

We are all out here doing our level best to survive and protect our families and communities and the places we live. We need to do our part in a regional initiative that promises significant returns to Pennsylvania while helping the country and the world come to grips with this problem – which truly is a life or death situation.