

## Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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Speaking for myself and the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy



Hi, my name is Richard Bloom and I am a rural resident of Ebensburg, Pennsylvania. Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of myself and the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy in support of Pennsylvania joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

I have a strong science background with a MS in Biology, 25 years of teaching high school science and a keen awareness of our changing climate from my background as a farmer and outdoorsman. I have a very personal stake in this situation; at 70 years old, I will likely not see the harshest effects of climate change; but I have two children and most importantly a precious 18-month-old granddaughter. I really worry about the world that they are inheriting from us due to climate change. I have watched winters, on the average, getting milder; more intense summer storms and flooding; more common droughts; planting zones moving north; the warming winters have allowed tick populations to explode threatening us with Lyme disease and allowing the wooly adelgid to move up from the south and threaten our state tree, the hemlock. That is just locally; nationally and internationally we are seeing dramatic increases in damages from hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, droughts and other weather-related phenomena. All of this threatens us and our economy, both in the short and long term.

The science behind this is clear. While global warming and climate change have happened naturally in the past; there is no evidence that that this time is natural. All hard scientific evidence that I have seen points to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, especially carbon dioxide, as the cause of this unnatural bout of global warming. And our consumption and burning of fossil fuels is the main source of these greenhouse gases.

Pennsylvania is historically and presently one of the major energy states with its history of coal, oil and natural gas. Many thousands of our citizens, including my grandfather Shea and my son-in law, made and make their living extracting these fossil fuels from the earth. There is a proud tradition of this in our area. But this industry also damaged the land, water and air; and in response Pennsylvania has also had a long tradition of regulating these industries while allowing them to successfully compete in our free market economy.

While the growing use of Pennsylvania's natural gas has already begun to reduce our emissions; we are still one of the top five CO<sub>2</sub> emitting states in the US. We need to do more. The cap and trade system that RGGI uses has helped our neighboring states lower their climate pollution and raise billions of dollars that are used to invest in clean energy and related programs.

Here in Pennsylvania, our participation in RGGI should create an incentive for fossil fuel power plants to invest in efficiency that should save them money while lowering their greenhouse gases and other pollutants; and they will also pay for CO<sub>2</sub> allowances that will help fund the continuing growth of the clean energy industry here in Pennsylvania. There is also evidence that RGGI has lowered electricity costs in participating states and is likely to do the same here as we switch to cheaper natural gas, solar and wind generated electricity. Additionally, money from the sale of these CO<sub>2</sub> allowances may be used to help us invest in more efficient

heating, cooling and other energy saving strategies; reducing emissions even farther as well as saving us more money and creating even more jobs. There are estimates that RGGI may produce over 20,000 new jobs and add over a billion dollars to our economy here in Pennsylvania. And this is in addition to the reductions in other pollutants that will result in cleaner air, water and reduced medical costs for all of our citizens.

Locally the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy has worked hard to promote and protect the Conemaugh River basin and its communities. We are worried about the health of this river that is beginning to recover from the historical damages caused by the coal and iron industries and now faces the new threat of climate change with its increasing temperatures, floods and droughts. Therefore, our Conservancy also supports the Regional Greenhouse Gas initiative.

My colleagues and myself believe that this is an important step as we transition to a more modern, more efficient, cleaner energy mix as we fight to slow and stop climate change.

Thank you