



Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on this important topic. My name is Tiffany Taulton and I will be providing comments on behalf of Hazelwood Initiative, Inc., a community development corporation focused on affordable housing. I am the Director of Community Initiatives and a Hazelwood resident.

Let me start by saying that Hazelwood Initiative, Inc. supports Pennsylvania's integration into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and hopes the money raised can be used to help communities like ours to transition to become healthier communities and full participants in the new green economy.

Greater Hazelwood is an environmental justice community in Pittsburgh located in the southern bend of the Monongahela River. Approximately 40% of our population is Black and the average income is just \$24,000—with over half of our renters earning less than \$15,000 a year. Once a thriving community of 13,000 people, we were the site of the LTV Coke Works, the last coke plant to close within the Pittsburgh city limits in 1998. Since then, we've lost 65% of our population and almost all of our jobs.

We have no grocery store, no clothing store, no community school, no gym, and only a few years ago were we able to reopen our library. We do have a recycle plant. We do have diesel trains running behind our homes and diesel trucks running down the middle of our community—our business district—along State Route 885. What we do have are high rates of asthma, autism, and diabetes—all of which have been positively correlated with air pollution.

What we do have is high unemployment and underemployment. But how can we expect parents to work when they have to take off every time their kid has an asthma attack? Last year, Pittsburgh made national headlines when it was named the most dangerous city in the country for a Black woman to live. Black women are earning less here and suffering more negative health outcomes. The State should take every possible action to correct this injustice—and that includes joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to reduce the harmful air pollutants that affect vulnerable communities like ours, leading to life-threatening conditions such as preeclampsia, pre-term births, low birthweights, asthma attacks, and lost wages. Recent studies have even linked higher air pollution rates to more severe cases of COVID-19 in minority communities!

Joining RGGI will not eliminate all air pollution or prevent every predicted danger of climate change from being realized, but it will greatly reduce pollution and improve the lives of everyone—particularly those who have been unfairly burdened by pollution for decades.

Additionally, on behalf of our community that has suffered these last forty years, we at Hazelwood Initiative, Inc. request that the funds earned from RGGI be used to help workers transition to green jobs and to help legacy communities like ours be set to rights. The impact of joining the Regional Greenhouse

Gas Initiative will be that much greater if the funds are used to help communities like Hazelwood to purchase solar panels, train residents in solar panel marketing and installation, and lower our carbon footprint through home energy efficiency upgrades.

Lastly, the funds could also be used for more targeted pollution reductions in environmental justice communities like ours that are situated along major transit corridors. No one should ever have to risk their health, or that of their child, to walk to the library. Please consider dedicating funding to help bus and recycling companies operating in EJ communities to convert their fleets to electric vehicles.

And with that, I conclude my comments. Thank you for your time.