



Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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Hi, my name is Kate Fissell, I'm testifying as a private citizen. I live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

I am asking you today to enter Pennsylvania into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and impose a cap on CO2 emissions from fossil fuel power plants. RGGI is a proven pathway to combat the climate crisis and improve Pennsylvania's dismal health statistics. What makes RGGI compelling to me is that it addresses multiple urgent problems in an economically feasible framework.

There is an over arching moral imperative to halt global warming caused by greenhouse gasses such as CO2. Here in Western PA we are seeing landslides, we are seeing people standing on tables in restaurants (before the pandemic) because when they came in everything was fine but by dessert torrential rains had put them in 3 feet of water. A friend of mine lost all the contents of the first floor of her house, including her extensive book collection in that South Hills flash flood. We're losing roads and basements, and we know other communities are losing their homes and their lives because of global warming caused by greenhouse gases like CO2. Experience from the last 10 years of RGGI shows that power plants absolutely can reduce their CO2 emissions. Given the right incentives, power plants in RGGI states dropped their emissions by 45% since 2009.

RGGI is a market based approach that gives power plants flexibility in dealing with their pollution. This is particularly important in these polarized times because I think market based approaches can be palatable across the political spectrum. The pollution emitted by power plants is what any economist from the most conservative to the most progressive recognizes as a market failure, an externality. You would not want to watch a Steelers or Eagles game without any referees on the field. You are our free market referees and you can use your whistle, and the powerful tools RGGI gives you, to make this game work for us.

Who ever said it was OK that my county, Allegheny County, crosses the finish line in the top 2% for cancer risk from air pollution ? Where is the yellow flag on Pennsylvania scoring the third highest cancer incidence rate of all U.S. states ? When you limit CO2 you also limit mercury, a neurotoxin that can cause brain damage, and fine particulate matter including Sulfur oxides and Nitrogen oxides implicated in multiple cancers. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has concluded that "Outdoor air pollution is not only a major environmental risk to health in general; it is the most important environmental cancer killer due to the large number of people exposed.". I personally know two co-workers and two friends in the outdoor recreation community who are battling blood cancers. I am asking you to join RGGI to stop the pollution causing these diseases. Air quality is of particular concern in Environmental Justice communities. So I am also asking you to prioritize monitoring air pollution in EJ communities and to prioritize RGGI investments in those communities.

I came to Pittsburgh over 20 years ago, because I had a job offer. I stayed because I liked it. I don't have family in the area and I often ask myself if I'm crazy to stay in such a dangerously polluted region. Support my choice and the choices of over 12 million Pennsylvania residents by taking advantage of the opportunity RGGI offers to make Pennsylvania a cleaner and safer home for all of us. Thank you.