



THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA



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Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

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Good afternoon, I am Sr. Nora Nash of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. I represent my congregation, a community of Franciscan women whose charism calls us to be strong proponents of climate change, environmental, and racial justice. We accept our moral responsibility to protect our environment, speak for the human rights of communities, human health and the overall “common good” of society. I also represent the Philadelphia Coalition for Responsible Investment (PACRI)

As a resident of Delaware County, I appreciate this opportunity to address the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, familiarly known as RGGI.**

Over a year ago, Governor Tom Wolf issued an executive action that instructed the DEP to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), actually, the first market-based collaborative program among nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This will not only help combat climate change but it puts a spotlight on economic growth through partnerships and other significant opportunities for cost-effective pollution abatement by limiting carbon pollution and linking it with RGGI.

Does Pennsylvania need RGGI? My answer is a resounding yes. According to CERES, Pennsylvania is “the nation’s fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions, and it must confront the reality that, in order to stay competitive and attractive in the modern economy, it needs to transition away from its reliance on high carbon-emitting energy sources. Carbon pricing policies like RGGI can help Pennsylvania achieve all of these goals-- with net economic benefits. Supporting policies that address this problem now can better prepare Pennsylvania for a low-carbon future while prioritizing re-tooling communities that have been traditionally reliant on the fossil fuel economy.”

Pennsylvania is at the tail end of a very ambitious collaborative that is tackling climate change, and our State has a moral imperative to advance just and equitable climate change solutions in light of the present dire scientific data. It must become an active participant with RGGI in reducing its Greenhouse Gas emissions and addressing serious health, equity, racial and environmental justice issues. Moreover, we are in the midst of the worst pandemic in our history and it is absolutely critical that our elected officials take urgent action to address the escalating crisis. “When one of us hurts, all of us hurt.” The people who suffer the most live in areas that are directly subject to flooding, and CO2 emissions from power plants, as was recently noted for those persons who live along the Darby Creek and Greys Ferry lowlands and floodplain.

The Good News is RESILIENCE:

- Expert analysis conducted for DEP estimates that Pennsylvania’s carbon pollution will be cut by 21% from 2022 to 2030 and at the same time create thousands of new clean energy jobs.
- A recent study by Columbia University researchers found that air pollution reductions generated by RGGI, such as that of atmospheric-formed PM2.5 from power plants, have reduced impacts to children’s health including asthma, preterm births and low birth weights.
- Leading companies and investors recognize that carbon pollution, which contributes to climate change, poses significant risks across all sectors of the economy.
- RGGI can be a “hallmark” program that will benefit all stakeholders as Pennsylvania’s economy seeks to “build back better” and provide a healthier environment for its citizens in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Legislators would be well served to act on the wishes of a vast majority of Pennsylvanians -- as substantiated by polling data -- who want their leaders to act on climate.

Thank you for considering my testimony. In summary, Pennsylvania, please join RGGI. We have no time to waste.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nina M. Hasky, DSE". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

RESOURCES

Pennsylvania Regional Greenhouse Gas emissions
<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/climate/Pages/RGGI.aspx>

Environmental Defense Fund <https://www.edf.org/>

Governor Wolf's Office

[https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/governor-wolf-reaffirms-commitment-to-combat-climate-change-provides-update-on-rggi-process/#:~:text=Governor%20Tom%20Wolf%20reaffirmed%20his,Greenhouse%20Gas%20Initiative%20\(RGGI\).](https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/governor-wolf-reaffirms-commitment-to-combat-climate-change-provides-update-on-rggi-process/#:~:text=Governor%20Tom%20Wolf%20reaffirmed%20his,Greenhouse%20Gas%20Initiative%20(RGGI).)

CERES <https://www.ceres.org/>

ICCR **Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility**

<https://www.iccr.org>