



Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

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Concerned Citizen

- Good day! My name is Kenda Hammer and...
- I live in Richland Township of Allegheny County with my husband. We are proud parents of two, now adult advocates of RGGI too.
- I'm a career-length Early Educator in the Fox Chapel Area School District and also at Pitt as Clinical Teaching Faculty Member beginning 2009. I present to you on behalf of 1000+ students I've been privileged to teach.
- As a student of Child Development, I graduated from the same program as Fred Rogers; I'm a Lifelong Learner, founding chair on a non-profit Arts Board, and Collaboration/Team-Building Coach.
- Teaching has energized me since my own student teaching at Sharpsburg Elementary, a low income/environmental justice community.
- From the very start, I embraced teaching in outdoor settings. By doing so, I promote healthy habits and a love of the environment. Activities I've led are: Creeking at Camp Guyasuta; Pontoon-boating on the Allegheny River from Sharpsburg to Pittsburgh with Ranger Mike Daniher; Hiking at Beechwood Farms; Whole Family Bicycling Rails to Trails – Millvale to PNC Park; Kerr Elementary Garden Storytime with the 2008 PA OneBook – Up, Down and Around by Pittsburgh author, Kathy Ayres.
- The positivity of engagement outdoors resounds for me and my students and is documented in books. Those sources however also unfortunately tell the perils of pollution and climate change. To learn more, seek the works of David Sobel in Childhood and Nature and Richard Louv in Last Child in the Woods.
- As you and I experience when walking outdoors, our breathing deepens; yet, that alone impacts us negatively since particulates present in the air, enter our airways. This is especially true also because Pennsylvania is one of the largest carbon polluters in the country! The futures of young kids like my students, who are among the most vulnerable to these toxins, are threatened by climate change. They will be impacted in Pennsylvania, with the negative results of climate change here, including dangerous heat waves, changing seasons, destructive flooding (In fact, like in river community, Sharpsburg, at my Family Literacy Center in 2004 due to Hurricane Ivan), landslides, agricultural losses, and more. I worry about how the kids I've taught can thrive with these dangers in their future.
- While RGGI is first and foremost a program to combat climate change by cutting carbon emissions, joining RGGI would also have added benefits for our health by reducing other forms of harmful air/water pollution.
- I have a firsthand undeniable view through students in schools who provide us a collective look at climate change-related health problems. Others here testifying today

have named respiratory diseases like asthma. I add an associated outcome of asthma that can actually be seen through the dramatically increased number of lifesaving inhalers prescribed!

- In 2013 at the High Five Kindergarten Kick-off at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3, I heard the school nurses' keynote that day. They started by showing photos of their Office walls, now covered with pegboard in order to organize an unwieldy number of individual student inhalers to medicate too many students across their school building populations.
- These asthma medications have become essential to breathing itself...yet were NEVER witnessed in my earlier years of teaching.
- Ask yourself – Can we afford to continue allowing polluters to pour climate-changing emissions into the environment, where these harmful pollutants especially impact children, seniors & low income/environmental justice communities?
- I implore you today, recognizing that with PA joining RGGI, we will travel the obviously healthy path to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. While we know it will significantly reduce air pollution and protect public health, we also know that it can predictively create 27,000 new jobs and put nearly \$2billion into the state's economy over the next 10 years alone. Even electricity prices will fall, as measured in existing RGGI states, by nearly 6%.
- Are you inspired by the hope and promise of removing pollutants as I am?
- Without question, because RGGI is one major, evidence-based initiative that we can and MUST take! Your Attention to commit NOW, even after decades of INattention, will reduce climate change, air and water pollution. For me, it will also assure leading students into another amazing and safe “outdoor classroom” once again!
- Thank you sincerely!