

## Compilation of RGGI Testimony from POWER

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### **Steven Greenspan**

Good Afternoon. My name is Steven Greenspan. I have a PhD in Cognitive Psychology and before retiring I was a vice president at a fortune 500 IT company, where I conducted scientific research and supported green business strategies. I am also a resident of Philadelphia and am grateful for this opportunity to address the Environmental Quality Board. As a resident, I pay taxes to haul away my trash and sewage. Likewise, businesses pay to have their trash removed and are expected to cleanup any toxic wastes that they dump in land or in water. Air pollution is the exception. Companies that burn natural gas to create electricity, pollute the air with greenhouse gases and toxins such as Sulfur Dioxide. And they do so with impunity. For these companies, our atmosphere is a free dumping ground!

Industrial CO2 emissions are a principal factor in climate change. The resulting increases- in-ground level ozone , causes or further aggravates a variety of respiratory ailments. The societal consequences include premature deaths, increased healthcare costs, loss of work due to illnesses, and increased vulnerability to viruses such as COVID19.

These damages are not evenly distributed. They tend to be concentrated in communities that are located near or downwind from the factories that emit greenhouse and other toxic gases. These Environmental Justice communities are typically black or brown or low income. For decades they have been unjustly burdened with the toxic emissions of nearby power generating plants, and therefore they – the EJ communities -- should be the major beneficiaries of the income derived from RGGI.

RGGI is not a cure-all for climate change or social injustice, but it can be a vital part of our state's response. The states that participated in RGGI reduced emissions from fossil fuels far more than other states that did not cap carbon emissions. The revenue generated from selling allowances has been invested in clean energy and energy efficiency. The DEP projects similar benefits for Pennsylvania, including a net increase of 27,000 jobs and hundreds of millions in state revenue. These are strong arguments for linking to RGGI and I urge the EQB and DEP to advance the draft rulemaking with urgency and with the following considerations:

1. A recent study from the U of Massachusetts discovered an unintended consequence of RGGI that needs to be avoided in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Under RGGI, carbon pricing and allowances encouraged some companies to shift power production to dirtier factories. The consequence was increased sulfur dioxide emissions near EJ communities that are in large population centers. This should not be allowed to happen in Pennsylvania! I urge the Department to adjust the rules and to use its authority to prohibit increasing emissions from any fossil fuel plants once RGGI is implemented, and to ensure that EJ communities are not subject to increased pollution as industry adjusts to RGGI.
2. The revenue generated through RGGI should not be placed in the state's general fund nor used to service the public debt or other investments unrelated to environmental repair and justice. An appropriate use of the revenue would be to reduce demand for power by improving infrastructure and insulation especially in rural and urban EJ communities. Another appropriate use would be to encourage new jobs in sustainable energy and to help workers in the fossil fuel industry transition to stable, safe jobs in a green economy.

In conclusion, I simply ask that the DEP and EQB align the actions of our state with Amendment 1, section 27 of our state constitution, "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment." **Your decisions are vital to ensuring that future generations will have clean air and environmental justice.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

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### **Wendy Greenspan**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony before the Environmental Quality Board regarding the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

RGGI will bring many benefits to Pennsylvania - a cleaner environment, a healthier population and a stronger economy. Pennsylvania will also benefit from a new revenue source. Through the RGGI auctions of CO2 allowances, it is estimated that in 2022 Pennsylvania will receive \$300M in additional revenue.

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<sup>1</sup> Chan, N. W., & Morrow, J. W. (2019). Unintended consequences of cap-and-trade? Evidence from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. *Energy Economics*, 80, 411-422.

How should this money be invested? I propose that a substantial portion of it be targeted to job development for two groups: 1) Environmental Justice communities and 2) workers in the fossil fuel industry. Environmental justice (EJ) communities are typically Black, Brown or Indigenous neighborhoods that have disproportionately suffered the effects of pollution. EJ communities have experienced high levels of unemployment for generations and deserve preferential consideration for jobs brought about by the implementation of RGGI. But job development should be directed to a second group as well - workers in the fossil fuel industries. While these workers have a history of good paying, secure jobs they now face a future of substantial unemployment as we transition to a green economy. It is regarding the concerns of this group, fossil fuel workers, that I will focus my comments.

Unemployment is something my family experienced firsthand. When our children were in high school, my husband lost a good paying job at AT&T due to industrywide workforce reductions. It was a very difficult time for us. We faced economic and emotional challenges and it was several years before we regained our footing. Recently I witnessed that same anxiety in others in the aftermath of the PES Oil Refinery explosion in 2019. I attended a public hearing on the future of the refinery that included many refinery workers and their spouses. I recall speaking to one couple who told me about young children at home and deep concerns about their future. I saw in their eyes the same fear and uncertainty that my husband and I faced when we were dealing with unemployment in our family. And then about a month later PES announced the layoffs of 1000 workers without meaningful severance and without benefits while executives of the company received huge bonuses. That was wrong, deeply wrong. And we cannot allow that to happen to others as Pennsylvania transitions from an extractive, fossil fuel economy to a renewable, green economy.

RGGI will provide a new and much needed revenue stream for Pennsylvania. With those funds, we need to create a comprehensive and long-term job transition program for workers from the fossil fuel industry. Opportunities exist for thousands of new jobs in renewable energy such as wind and solar, and in the energy efficiency sector. We need to ensure that those are secure, unionized, long-term jobs with family sustaining wages, good benefits and reliable retirement pensions. Such a job transition program will be a complex process and therefore planning needs to start early to be ready for the changes ahead.

I often wonder what happened to that young couple I spoke with at the PES Oil Refinery hearing. I'm certain that the layoffs were a considerable hardship for them. Let's make sure this doesn't happen to any other Pennsylvanians. With funding from RGGI, let's create a strong and comprehensive job transition program to move valuable workers from the fossil fuel industry into the new green economy.

Thank you.

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**On behalf of Earth Quaker Action Team  
Eileen Flanagan**

My name is Eileen Flanagan, and I live in Philadelphia, PA. I'm speaking today on behalf of Earth Quaker Action Team as the former board chair. A faith-based group founded in southeastern Pennsylvania, EQAT's mission is to work for a just and sustainable economy. For the past five years, our focus has been the Power Local Green Jobs Campaign.

Unfortunately, a just and sustainable economy is far from what we have right now. It saddens me that my home state is one of the highest emitters of carbon dioxide in the country. That means that we are disproportionately contributing to climate change around the world, including in our own communities. We are locking in a future of increasing heat waves, flooding, drought, and even tornadoes, which growing up in Montgomery County, were something I only knew of from watching *The Wizard of Oz*. It is clear that climate chaos will affect all segments of our state—businesses, farmers, schools—but its deadly effects will fall especially hard on those who are already economically vulnerable.

In addition to the dangers posed by climate change, Pennsylvania's reliance on fossil fuels has caused extreme pollution. I remember the first time I brought my daughter to the emergency room with asthma at age five. When I asked what caused it, the Children's Hospital nurse said it was likely from pollution. And yet I know that my Northwest Philadelphia neighborhood is not the worst affected. PA has one of the largest racial exposure gaps in the country, the result of fossil fuel facilities being disproportionately located in Black and brown communities. This has a plethora of unequal health impacts, most recently, increasing vulnerability to Covid-19. It is long past time that Pennsylvania transition off of fossil fuels. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is an important step in that direction.

I know that critics of RGGI cite concern for the fossil fuel industry and especially the workers. Speaking from my own family experience, I know economic and technological changes do fall hard on workers, and it's important that we support them in transitioning to new industries. Both of my great-grandfathers were coal miners in the anthracite region, though those jobs were mostly gone by the time my father returned from World War II. He had to leave Pottsville and found work on a Sun oil tanker before he eventually settled in Montgomery County with my mother. Her father had been a blacksmith, shoeing horses out of his Philadelphia garage. Although he only had a fourth-grade education, when he saw the horseless carriage, he understood what that would mean for his business. So, while training his sons in his own trade, he also made sure they learned auto mechanic skills that helped them through the Depression. That kind of foresight is needed now, to prepare Pennsylvanians for the jobs of the future.

One of the strengths of RGGI is that it will both limit the dangerous emissions, and provide revenue to help us with the energy transition that is inevitable, but still too slow. Pennsylvania is now second to last for solar capacity on the east coast, which means we have tremendous potential for growth. RGGI is predicted to create more than 27,000 jobs in Pennsylvania through renewable energy and energy efficiency. In Philadelphia, the poorest big city in the country, our communities desperately need family-sustaining jobs, as well as clean air to breathe. Earth Quaker Action Team sincerely hopes that the hundreds of millions of dollars that will be generated by RGGI will be used to address both emissions and inequality—especially racial inequality, which has caused so much needless suffering. With RGGI projected to add \$1.9 billion

to the state's economy by 2030, Pennsylvania will have the opportunity to help our entire state, while prioritizing those who need new opportunities the most.

In closing we at EQAT encourage you to affirm RGGI and make modifications to the rulemaking to incorporate inclusion and equity and environmental justice principles. Thank you for your attention.

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### **L. Ingrid Lakey**

Good afternoon. My name is Ingrid Lakey. I live in West Philadelphia, just 5 blocks from the house I grew up in where my father still lives. I am a proud Pennsylvanian. My father's great-grandparents came to this country and settled upstate in North Hampton County where the men in his family became slate miners. I say this because I understand that PA has been rich in resources and that the state and country have been profiting off of hundreds of years of extraction whether it has been slate, oil, coal or natural gas. Many jobs have been created. But there has also been a tremendous cost to us particularly in how we have relied on fossil fuels which have been polluting our air and water, making people sick and massively contributing to climate change. Our over-reliance on oil, coal and natural gas has slowed our embrace and development of renewable energy sources and the job creation that goes with it. I am NOT proud that Pennsylvania is the third dirtiest state in the country in terms of carbon pollution.

Joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative gives us a real opportunity to change direction because right now we are heading full steam ahead off a cliff of climate disaster and economic polarization. We as - Pennsylvanians - have an opportunity and responsibility to address the disproportionate and devastating impact of decades of pollution on low-income families and on communities of color who have been *left out* of the profits of the fossil fuel economy but *left with* increased rates of asthma and the other health and economic impacts of environmental racism. While I believe that we should join RGGI, it must include protections by not allowing the power producers to *increase* emissions in these communities and electricity rates cannot be allowed to go up for low-income households.

RGGI also has the potential to be a jobs creator – an analysis for the PA DEP showed that we stand to gain more than 27,000 jobs. I ask that those workers from former coal powered electric plants get the training they need to move into the green jobs sector.

There is nothing inherently true about the idea that working people have to decide between good paying jobs and the climate. This is only true when we have engineered it to be this way. RGGI gets us a step closer to a thriving green economy for this state that has been in the hands of the fossil fuel industry for too long.

For hundreds of years the fossil fuel industry has never paid the true cost of extraction. Climate change is already here and already making life harder for everyone across our state from farmers to city dwellers. Temperatures in Pennsylvania are projected to increase by 5.4 degrees by 2050 and the number of days with a heat index above 90 degrees will increase dramatically from eight to 40 per year. This past summer, Philadelphia recorded 36 days of 90-plus readings. The health and economic impacts of this must be included when we consider the true cost of a fossil fuel driven economy.

If this year has taught us anything it is that the status quo is unacceptable and we must find new ways to deal with the triple threats of climate change, increasing economic stratification and racial injustice. We've watched California burn, racial justice uprisings around the country, and the disparities in how the coronavirus pandemic has affected black, brown, indigenous, and low-income people in our communities. What else needs to happen before we are ready to act on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors?! In closing, I ask that the Environmental Quality Board affirm RGGI to pass on to the Governor and make modifications to the rulemaking to incorporate inclusion and equity and environmental justice principles. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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### **Mark Smith**

Good evening. My name is Mark Smith. I live in Philadelphia and am speaking to you as a citizen in support of our commonwealth becoming the eleventh state to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

RGGI is already a resounding success in the 10 states currently enrolled in the program reducing greenhouse gas emissions by over a third, raising \$3 billion for clean energy re-investments and outpacing states not participating in the program by over 90% in emissions reductions! An analysis by Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection indicates that PA will have a similar benefit creating over 27,000 jobs and adding \$1.9 billion to the state's economy.

The climate is changing dramatically from the burning of fossil fuels but the pollution they cause has another, more immediate effect on public health, especially for disadvantaged and people of color who tend to live in closest proximity to power plants. As a major electricity producer Pennsylvania can transform from one of the most polluting states to one that experiences a \$6 billion savings in health benefits by 2030 that would include a reduction in tens of thousands of asthma attacks and fewer cases of childhood bronchitis.

The average temperature is expected to rise by 5.4 degrees by 2050 and the number of days with a heat index above 90 degrees will increase from 8 to 40 per year. Extreme summer heat will effect urban poor and people of color inordinately, not only because they have less resources to respond, but because the heat island effect in many urban areas with higher amounts of heat absorbing concrete and asphalt can have daily temperature differences of 10 to 20 degrees compared to suburban and rural areas. The forecast increases in temperatures and changes in climate without taking action will have a major impact on Pennsylvania's agriculture economy, as well.

RGGI will be a positive catalyst for the market forces already in action as the country transforms to sustainable methods of power generation that do not include the burning of fossil fuels. Even though the jobs created in the new energy economy will grow Pennsylvania's overall employment numbers, it will be important to use income from RGGI to specifically address people employed in industries directly effected in the transition. Lower income groups that will be inordinately disadvantaged by climate

change should have a significant portion of RGGI income made available for home repair, weatherization and relief from RGGI related rate increases.

Changes in economy and employment for Pennsylvania and the country have been constantly transforming since the early days of the nation and our ability to change along with it is part of our success. As an example, I have lived in Pennsylvania for 34 years but grew up in Ohio. Most of my ancestors arrived from Europe through the port of Philadelphia and farmed for several generations in various parts of Pennsylvania before moving to Ohio to continue farming. My parents were the last generation to grow up on farms. As an adult, my father was employed by the local electric utility and worked with farmers in making the transition to electricity and automation in their dairy operations.

So, agriculture, industry, and the ways in which we obtain energy will continue to change. However, this is an exceptional time that requires foresight into a future that will have catastrophic results if the crisis of climate change is not met head on. Systemic changes are needed to work more effectively together as a country and support the sustainable market forces that are shaping our future. RGGI's already proven record of success demonstrates support for business and families while dramatically curbing CO2 emissions.

I urge the Environmental Quality Board to make the adjustments recommended, affirm the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and pass it on to the Governor for implementation. Thank you for your time.

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**Nora Elmarzouky**

I am Nora Elmarzouky, a climate justice organizer and resident in Philadelphia. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the public hearings, which you've made more accessible than hearings in the past. Climate change is undeniable as we see dramatic weather shifts, hurricanes, typhoons, as well as here in Pennsylvania. We have faced extensive power outages due to extreme weather events, including that of Isaiah that hit southeastern PA earlier this year. My home Egypt faces rising sea levels due to melting ice caps is destroying agriculture along the northern Nile River basin. Scientific evidence, which I am sure you have heard much of the statistics, proves that the pollution that is emitted from the fossil fuel industry is directly correlated with climate change. We also know that the communities that face the brunt of both climate change and environmental degradation from fossil fuel burning power plants are Black, Brown, Indigineous, low-income and other marginalized communities. This environmental degradation and harm causes decreased property values of the surrounding communities around these plants, compounding the issues faced. These polluting power plants are making our communities sick. Recent studies show that communities surround power plants have had higher rates of COVID-19 largely often due to pre-existing health conditions. It doesn't have to be that way.

It is possible to begin to reverse these impacts and repair past harms with RGGI. As we have seen from other states, RGGI has lowered carbon emissions, increased state GDP, and saved people money on electric bills and hospitalization costs. RGGI is an

opportunity to put the first brick in place for a just transition for dying industries like coal to transition to other industries such as the clean power energy. However, we want to ensure that the RGGI rulemaking is developed in an equitable and inclusive manner taking into consideration the harms mentioned. That means while the state may be benefiting in all these ways, it is equally, if not more important for the frontline communities that are neighbors of these power plants to also receive these same benefits, especially in health outcomes and air quality, which has been promised through RGGI. So I call on you to incorporate the necessary mechanisms into the rulemaking that protects frontline communities and repairs these past and present harms. By incorporating equity measures into RGGI, we have an opportunity to address community development - tackling multiple issues related to quality of life - through a clean energy pathway. We know that living wage clean energy jobs are exponentially increasing and Pennsylvanians want more renewable energy, while the coal industry is dying out. It is critical for PA to begin to take the steps towards supporting those communities to build transition plans that can address job loss and as the carbon limits decrease through RGGI.

The revenue generated from RGGI can be invested in communities on the frontlines through the Clean Air Act. That revenue can be used towards energy efficiency, greenspace development, utility bill subsidies, and the development of clean renewable energy. At the same time, there must be supplemental funds to design the workforce development pathways and individual and community support for a just transition. I support the idea of RGGI and what RGGI could be. I implore that you do not do business as usual and think about who needs to be protected through this bill, so that we see lowered greenhouse gas emissions across the state and in community, improved health outcomes, and renewable energy access for all Pennsylvanians. It is the constitutional responsibility of the Department of Environmental Protection to protect citizens' absolute right to "clean air, pure water, and the preservation of natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment." Take that responsibility seriously and pass RGGI with equitable principles incorporated into the rulemaking.

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### **Rev. John Bergen**

My name is Rev. John Bergen, and I serve as a Pastor at Germantown Mennonite Church in the Germantown neighborhood in Philadelphia. But before I was a pastor, I grew up in a small town in central Kansas. Every week when we drove out to visit my great aunt and uncle on their farm, we passed natural gas pumping units standing in every wheat field. Any time we took a trip to the big city of Wichita, or left the county driving in any direction, we passed gas compressors and oil refineries. It is not surprising, then, that I, like many of my friends, developed asthma, and to this day sometimes struggle to breathe after exercising. For the past year, after I go on a run, I always ask myself, "Do I have COVID, or did I just grow up near fossil fuel infrastructure?"

I left home to attend college in northeast Ohio, just as the fracking companies that had decimated Western PA began to make their play for the Utica Shale fields. A couple moved to our small town in Ohio from Washington County, PA, having literally fled the



state because of the toxic fumes, flammable water, and rising cancer rates. Our other neighbors were dealing with decades of industrial collapse in and around Youngstown and Cleveland, and struggled to resist the deal pushed on them by the government and corporate interests: Sell us your mineral rights, and after we leave a poorly-capped well that leaks everywhere you and your neighbors will be stuck holding the medical bills. Because the state offered no other meaningful economic opportunities, many made this deal with the devil. Some people died: From cancer, from explosions, from poverty when the jobs went elsewhere. The devil always wins these deals.

I now live in West Philadelphia, less than two miles from the recently-closed PES refinery. Once again, the fossil fuel industry has spent decades poisoning my neighbors and warping the local economy into its vision. I have sat in meetings convened by the city that have pitted steelworkers against their neighbors, a false choice between economic well-being and health.

I am here to testify in favor of Pennsylvania joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. I call on the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and the Department of Environmental Protection to not allow fossil fuel power plants to increase their emissions once RGGI is implemented. Additionally, the Department must rely upon site-specific data to inform the full scope of existing and potential degradation and to impose additional conditions that are necessary to prevent and remedy degradation. Ultimately, our state's participation in RGGI is a matter of survival. The dying fossil fuel industry sits on our democratic processes as a huge, dead weight. Fossil fuels industries have been poisoning and profiting for too long, while preventing disadvantaged environmental justice communities from achieving justice and clean energy technologies from gaining greater usage. It is not enough that we join RGGI and use it to take the equivalent of four million cars off the road, as the DEP's own study has said that it would. The rule-making should follow equity principles by distributing environmental and economic benefits to disproportionately impacted communities that have faced historic environmental disparities, severe economic harm, or demonstrated cumulative impact of environmental risk. We must and we can use this opportunity to create jobs for communities who have never recovered from deindustrialization, and who have been systematically excluded from the economy. We can and we must prioritize projects to improve the health and well-being of those who are suffering under the dead weight of the devil's deal.

For too long, our state has shaken hands with the devil, and the devil has come to collect his dues in the lungs of our children, the bodies of our neighbors, and the poverty of our communities. It is time to break this contract, and forge a green new deal with the people of Pennsylvania. It is time to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and use it as one tool in this fight to create good jobs and a livable planet for all.

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**Dieynabou Barry**

Hi, my name is Dieynabou Barry and I am the Climate Justice Lead at the Partnership for Working Families. I work closely with POWER on their energy campaigns. I was born and raised in the South Bronx, the poorest congressional district in the U.S. and one of the heaviest polluted neighborhoods in New York City. I am no stranger to polluted air

and the negative health effects that follow. At the height of the pandemic, my zip code was one of the hardest hit and this can be tied to the fossil fuel operations that have led my family, friends, and neighbors to live with respiratory illnesses which ultimately led to their suffering and in some instances, death. Climate change is personal to me and my neighborhood and as we know, tackling climate change requires working together on a global scale. This is why Pennsylvania joining RGGI is important to me. Yes, for the greenhouse gas emission reductions, but also for redressing environmental harms that low-income, immigrant, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other communities of color have had to bear and will continue to bear as the climate crisis deepens.

It is imperative that equity is centered in the RGGI rule-making process for environmental and climate justice to be achieved. Although RGGI is designed to reduce the total emissions in Pennsylvania, it is possible that hot spots will emerge or in some cases heighten in low-income and communities of color that are already burdened by pollution. So we may see emissions decrease statewide, while they actually increase in certain communities. If RGGI is designed without equity, emission allowances might disproportionately end up in the hands of dirtier plants, which are themselves disproportionately located in these environmental justice communities or some power producers may shift generation and/or build new power plants in these areas because it is cheaper and the communities are politically disenfranchised. Therefore, it is important the Environmental Quality Board ensures that fossil fuel plants do not increase their emissions. The Department must rely upon site-specific data to inform the full scope of existing and potential degradation and to impose additional conditions that are necessary to prevent and remedy degradation. In addition, the board should ensure that low-income and communities of color receive an equitable share of co-pollutant reduction benefits. The rule-making should equitably distribute environmental and economic benefits to disproportionately impacted communities that have faced historic environmental disparities, severe economic harm, or demonstrated cumulative impact of environmental risk.

Additionally, to redress environmental harm, investments must be made in environmental justice communities. A low estimate of the revenue generated through RGGI in Pennsylvania is \$300 million in the first year. It should be required that environmental justice communities who do not see an immediate decrease in emission levels should receive no less than twenty percent of the funds earned from RGGI to fund environmental and health mitigation projects. These projects such as solar power infrastructure, home weatherization, and utility credits, should be prioritized in the communities where emission levels are not decreased in the first five years under the RGGI program.

Moreover, the board should allocate no less than 50 percent of the funds generated from RGGI into a new fund to invest in projects that will either remediate injury from past adverse side effects caused to low-income and environmental justice communities or invested into programs that will prevent future harm in such communities. This would include investments into projects such as renewable energy infrastructure, energy efficiency development, and pollution mitigation projects in the state's most impacted communities.

I know as a resident of New York that RGGI has the power to decrease carbon emissions and generate revenue to invest in communities like mine. I also know that

without centering equity in the rule-making, communities like mine won't reap the health and economic benefits of RGGI. Let Pennsylvania learn from New York's experiences and ensure rulemaking includes equity considerations. Thank you for your time.

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### **Dwayne Winkler**

My name is Dane Winkler. I live in Butler, PA with my wife Nikki and our two children. I work in IT and Nikki works for Butler County Children and Youth Services. Butler is a small town 30 miles north of Pittsburgh. Our town thrived in the hey-day of steel and glass production. Our claim to fame is that Butler is where the first Bantam Jeep rolled off the assembly line in 1940. President Eisenhower called it, "one of the decisive weapons the U.S. had during WW II." We celebrate with an annual Jeepfest in June, but not in 2020. We're keeping our fingers crossed for 2021. Since the evolution of the steel industry, lost jobs from NAFTA, automation and general ebbs and flows of the business world Butler has never rebounded properly. Our poverty level is well above the national and state average. But none of that can take away the pride that many feel for our town. Steel is still produced in Butler and Pittsburgh to this day. But it's nowhere near as good as it once was. Pittsburgh has enjoyed a resurgence of job creation over the past 15 years. Butler; not so much. We need help. We need jobs. RGGI is a program that can help the struggling people. If you look at Butler County's job numbers they are actually better than almost every county that surrounds us. But those numbers is carried by the thriving growth in Cranberry and Adams townships. Which border northern Allegheny County. If you split the numbers between Northern and Southern Butler County you will see a massive difference. I know, I live there. And I work for the only daily newspaper in Butler County; The Butler Eagle.

Furthermore, Nationally 8.4% of children live with asthma. Pennsylvania = 10%. Allegheny county = 11%. If you drill down to the spots in Allegheny County where children live with Asthma the majority of them are kids who live near the rivers, where the steel producing plants sit. Clairton Coke Works this year paid fines and settled lawsuits totaling over \$2 million for all of the air, water and ground pollution they've been causing. Reducing Asthma and a living in a job producing economy is only a fraction of what a program like RGGI can do for the state of Pennsylvania. But it should be enough to join it.

This is direct from the Pennsylvania State Constitution, Article I, section 27: The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

We need to do the right thing. For the planet, for the people, for the economy, for our futures and our children's futures. Join RGGI, cut pollution, leave carbon in the ground, create jobs, and preserve our environment.

Thank you to the Department of Energy and POWER for organizing this and for allowing me to tell my story and share my passions. I yield my time, thank you.

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## **Audra Wolfe**

My name is Audra Wolfe, and I am a resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this virtual public hearing. In Philadelphia, where I live, we routinely breathe in some of the dirtiest air in the country. We know that air pollution disproportionately affects black, brown, and low-income communities, and that emissions affect workers as well as residents. We know that polluting industries take advantage of racism, apathy, and economic desperation to locate their facilities in areas that don't have the political power to stop them.

Many, if not most, of these polluting sites are the legacy of Pennsylvania's fossil fuel economy. Ever since Edwin Drake drilled the first oil well in Titusville in 1859, the state's approach to regulating fossil fuels has shown an alarming willingness to sacrifice the long-term welfare of its inhabitants in exchange for short-term boosts to its economy. I experienced this first-hand in the summer of 2019, when the boom and light from the explosion at the PES Refinery woke me up and filled my bedroom with an eerie yellow light.

Today, Pennsylvania is the second-largest producer of energy in the country. While joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, will not solve all of Pennsylvania's pollution problems, joining the bipartisan program would be an important first step in cutting the state's pollution. It would also raise hundreds of millions of dollars that the state could use to address the environmental and social harms created by more than a century-and-a-half of fossil fuel extraction.

In Pennsylvania, our state constitution grants citizens the right to clean air.<sup>1</sup> But access to this right is uneven. One specific way that the regulatory system fails our citizens is by relying on the very companies that pollute as the primary source of air quality monitoring data. In January of this year, NBC News reported that the PES Refinery had been releasing extraordinarily high levels of benzene for all but 12 weeks between January 2018 and September 2019. During a two-week period in July 2019, after the explosion, the readings were literally off the charts, showing benzene levels more than 21 times higher than the EPA's recommendations.

I live less than two miles from the refinery's north gate. Like so many Philadelphians, I have

asthma. It's usually controlled, but for most of the summer of 2019, I just couldn't catch my breath. The terror of the refinery explosion and the trickle of information afterwards highlight two things relevant to the rules-making process for RGGI. First, that the current regulatory environment puts the public's safety in the hands of the people whose very operations threaten our health. Second, that risk is not distributed equally. A 2017 report from the NAACP and the Clean Air Task Force showed that African Americans are 75 percent more likely than other Americans to live in fenceline communities and Philadelphia's refinery is a classic case of this pattern.

The RGGI program offers an opportunity for Pennsylvania to begin righting some of these

wrongs, even those that are not directly related to electricity generation. The program must be implemented with care, so that emissions allowances do not disproportionately end up in the hands of dirty plants, which may themselves be disproportionately located in disadvantaged communities that host other polluting facilities that may or may not be covered by RGGI. I urge the DEP to use the funds generated by the auction fees to redress the harms of a century-and-a-half of environmental racism in Pennsylvania. As a starting point, environmental justice communities who do not see an immediate decrease in emission levels should receive no less than 20 percent of the funds earned from RGGI to fund environmental and health mitigation projects. For example, funds could be used for energy retrofits for low-income homeowners in environmental justice communities, which would have the simultaneous effect of lowering their energy costs and lowering emissions by reducing energy demands. The funds also present an opportunity for the DEP to invest in a more robust air monitoring system that would allow the state to protect its citizens without relying so heavily on reporting from polluters. RGGI and its associated funds offer an opportunity for the state to fulfill its constitutionally mandated responsibility to ensure clean air and clean water for its residents. Implemented properly, RGGI can help Pennsylvania begin to understand the legacy of its fossil fuel economy and repair the damage it has caused. Thank you for considering my testimony.

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### **Rev. Linda Noonan**

Implementing RGGI makes both moral and economic sense. As a state, we would not only live into to our constitutional responsibility to protect the right of all our citizens to clean air, but we would strengthen our economy and increase jobs.

My name is Rev. Linda Noonan, and I am the Senior Pastor at Chestnut Hill United Church in Philadelphia. I testify today on behalf of my congregation which is a member of POWER Interfaith. Through our Environmental Justice Center, we have been educating ourselves and the broader community about climate change for more than two decades, advocating for our elected leaders to take meaningful action to address what has now become the climate crisis.

We are seeing the ravages of climate change right now, right here in Philadelphia and across this state. Climate change and dirty energy disproportionately impact the most vulnerable among us: those living in poverty, communities of color, the elderly, and young children.

We are thus called by our faith to address the causes of climate change as a moral imperative. Hence our support for RGGI.

We must work hard to wean ourselves off fossil fuels as quickly as possible. This includes, of course, the coal and natural gas burned in the power plants that are the targets of RGGI.

The harm done by dirty power plants touches us all, but disproportionately hurts poor folk and people of color. These facilities are almost always built near low-income, Black and Brown communities which suffer the highest rates of asthma, respiratory diseases, and COVID-19. Unemployment in these areas is also higher and the land devalued

because of environmental pollution. Cleaning up the pollution from these dirty plants will directly improve the health and economic stability of surrounding communities.

Chestnut Hill United Church supports RGGI's market-based approach of putting a price on carbon pollution and offering financial incentives to the power plant owners to lower emissions. Corporations driven by doing what is best for their profit margins cannot be expected to *voluntarily* do what is best for the people and the planet. Rules like RGGI make it easier for corporations to do what is right. Which only then makes it possible for the state to truly protect its citizens.

We know that this approach works: Carbon pollution has been cut by 47% in the other states that participate in RGGI, outpacing carbon pollution cuts in the rest of country by 90%. And not only did their economies *not* suffer, but they grew *stronger*. Economic growth in the RGGI states has outpaced the rest of the country by 31% during this time, according to the Acadia Center.

An in-depth analysis for the state's Department of Environmental Protection confirmed that Pennsylvania would see similar success: RGGI will lead to a net increase of more than 27,000 jobs and add \$1.9 billion to the state's economy by 2030.

Our State Constitution guarantees Pennsylvania's citizens an absolute right to clean air. This means that it's our *constitutional* responsibility, as well as our *moral* responsibility, to push for clean air for every one of our citizens, no matter their class, race, health, age, or zip code.

Chestnut Hill United Church commends Gov. Wolf and his administration for recognizing that the road to a more equitable Pennsylvania leads through the prompt implementation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

We must implement RGGI in Pennsylvania as soon as possible in service to Dr. King's recognition of the holy interconnectedness of every one of us.

In other words, here in Pennsylvania, when *one* of us can't breathe, *none* of us should breathe easy until we've done all we can to protect us all.

Thank you.

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### **Gordon Witman**

Good morning.

-Main point is that this is long-overdue but implementation needs to make equity the top priority so that everyone is able to benefit.

-Speaking as:

-A Philadelphia resident who lives 20 blocks from a power plant that would be covered by RGGI, noting that while everyone in PA will benefit from limiting pollution those of us who live close to power plants have the most at stake in improving air quality.

-A person with asthma, noting that joining RGGI is projected to reduce the number of children with asthma by 45,000 over the next ten years

- As a person of faith, who believes that we have a moral obligation to protect the people and places we love, to be responsible stewards of our environment for future generations, and to make racial and economic equity a cornerstone of our public policy.
  - As a senior advisor at Faith in Action, which is the national umbrella organization for POWER Interfaith and is dedicated to advancing racial and economic equity.
  - In that capacity in 2019 I worked on an effort to help houses of worship in PA go solar.
  - The biggest obstacle we faced was the difficulty of accessing capital compared to other states. That was a direct result of how far behind PA is supporting clean energy.
  - In addition to the pressing need to update the state's renewable energy portfolio standards, joining RGGI will help make more investment available for clean energy and the good jobs and income that investment creates.
  - The key to successfully implementing RGGI in PA is to make sure that both the health and economic benefits of the initiative are targeted to the communities that have suffered the most from pollution and face the greatest obstacles to benefiting from clean energy.
  - As the DEP implements RGGI, it must make equity a priority in how the effort is monitored - by tracking and reporting on the impact of the initiative on EJ communities and making adjustments to avoid the unintended creation of hotspots.
  - And it must invest the revenue generated by RGGI in energy efficiency and renewable energy in low-income communities and communities of color that are most excluded from access to capital to transition to clean energy.
  - Pennsylvania's future is clean energy, but we need to make sure everyone is included.
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### **Charmaine Butler**

Good evening to the panelists. My name is Charmaine Butler. I am a wife, a mother of two adult children, and I have two grandchildren, ages 12 and 8. I am also a resident of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. Thank you for the opportunity to speak at today's virtual public hearing. I am here to further support the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ("Commonwealth") joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ("RGGI")

While we wait for the Commonwealth to make its decision to adopt RGGI, please let us take a moment to reimagine RGGI in Pennsylvania and its impact on environmental racism, economic growth, and health disparities.

I cannot talk about RGGI until I bring your attention to environmental justice. Now, I know the topic of racism may make some of you uncomfortable, so hopefully after my testimony you will be at ease. The Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income." Environmental justice areas in the Commonwealth are places where at least 20% of the population lives in poverty or 30% are non-white minorities. The DEP has identified over one thousand of those areas in the state, spread across nearly every county. When companies build polluting facilities like landfills, incinerators, or mines in one of those areas, the DEP encourages them to host community meetings.

However, Environmental racism is not your problem but America's problem.

Environmental racism refers to the way in which minority group neighborhoods

(populated primarily by people of color and members of low socioeconomic groups) are burdened with a disproportionate number of hazards, including toxic waste facilities, garbage dumps, and other sources of environmental pollution and foul odors that lower the quality of life.

The statistics on environmental racism are shocking. Robert Bullard (“Bullard”), a sociologist, conducted a 25 year comparative study about African Americans’ lives: environmentally unsound housing, schools with asbestos problems, facilities and playgrounds with lead paint and “race to be more important than socioeconomic status in predicting the location of the nation’s commercial hazardous waste facilities” (Bullard et al. 2007). Sociologists with the project are examining how environmental racism is addressed in the long-term cleanup of the environmental disasters caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Bullard’s research found, for example, that African American children are five times more likely to have lead poisoning (the leading environmental health threat for children) than their Caucasian counterparts, and that a disproportionate number of people of color reside in areas with hazardous waste facilities (Bullard et al. 2007). One national study compared current temperatures in places developers ranked “Best” vs. “Hazardous.” Those hazardous areas are hotter than the “best” areas in cities across Pennsylvania, by 7 degrees Fahrenheit in Erie, 4 degrees in Altoona, and 9 degrees in Philadelphia. Heat is more lethal for people with underlying medical conditions like heart and lung disease. It is critical that RGGI does not leave frontlines communities behind when determining statewide benefits and how they invest the revenue of RGGI. RGGI has been a big success where it is already in place, cutting climate pollution by a third and raising nearly \$3 billion to invest in clean energy and other purposes. Investments in energy efficiency, from revenue created by RGGI, can reduce electric bills. In the states already participating in RGGI, investments under the program have helped save consumers more than a billion dollars on their energy bills thus far.

That is why Pennsylvania must plan for the transition that is already happening, and to prepare Pennsylvania workers for the energy jobs of the future.

A portion of the proceeds could be used to help workers and communities who will be affected by the ongoing and inevitable transition of the energy market away from coal to natural gas and renewables.

Finally, here’s what the data shows about RGGI that (1) the climate is changing in Pennsylvania and across these United States because of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels like coal, natural gas, and oil; (2) Temperatures in Pennsylvania are projected to increase by 5.4 degrees by 2050 and the number of days with a heat index about 90 degrees will increase dramatically from eight to 40 per year; and (3) Power outages from extreme storms across Pennsylvania hit a record high in 2019, disrupting electricity service for nearly 2 million families and businesses.

I would like to refresh your memory to the devastating and worst tropical storm so far in Pennsylvania that happened this year, evidence of the impact of climate change on our state. In August 2020, Upper Darby, Lansdowne, and Chester were shattered by the storm “Isiasa,” which created a tsunami from the Darby Creek in these communities. [More than 400,000 people](#) were reported without power at one point. We are seeing



the effects of climate change locally, nationally, and globally. Let's do the right thing by making sure that RGGI passes and is equitable for all.

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### **Rev. Angela Brown-Vann**

Greetings to everyone concerned. I am Rev. Angela Brown - Vann and I am a life-long resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I have attended public schools here and graduated from a private University in Philadelphia. I am an associate minister of St. Mark AME Zion Church in Newtown, PA. I work as an ambassador for social justice for POWER Interfaith in Philadelphia and I am an entrepreneur. I am speaking today as a private citizen, on behalf of my family and myself.

I am testifying because I believe it is time to reinvent our government in Pennsylvania by implementing RGGI. When I was growing up I always heard an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Now it seems instead of speaking of prevention we hear more about treating problems. As capitalism became more important, humanitarianism seems to have gone wanting. Fire suppression versus fire prevention; criminal prosecution versus crime prevention and pollution cleanup versus environmental protection.

As we've heard from previous speakers today and as we all know, we now have a crisis in environmental pollution. We've dealt with environmental pollution before and we can continue the work we've done. We started with product pollution and gained great strides in that area with recycling here in Pennsylvania as we continue to keep persons aware of the need to recycle many things in order to protect our environment. Then, we found a way to make recycling a Revenue Center and bring jobs in the area of Recycling.

The goal with RGGI is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while generating economic growth. Well, we've done it before, we can do it again. We can clean up the environment and make it a revenue center at the same time. Greenhouse gases have been found to cause health issues like asthma, neurological issues and other issues known and unknown. I mentioned that I am a lifelong resident of Philadelphia. I live near a powerplant and I have a neurological condition. Why didn't I move? Where would I go? There's so much pollution in our environment it's impossible to know where to go to protect my health from everything. So, to reinvent our government we need government to WORK for us. Work means actually coming up with AND IMPLEMENTING things like RGGI that are effective strategies to change the environment for our families and next generations.

Let's do the same thing with greenhouse gases that we did with plastics, paper, aluminum and other environmental pollutants, let's get to work, clean up the environment, make it a revenue center and reinvest in our communities. What can we use the money for? Jobs, we need them in Pennsylvania. Education, public schools are closing in Philadelphia because they have asbestos; so the students often live in homes with lead, in communities with air pollution and go to schools with asbestos - and we wonder why they're behind in education. They have health related issues and we aren't helping them.

Finally, medical studies are predicting COVID-19 will leave millions with chronic respiratory illnesses. We need to clean up the environment quickly to make breathing

easier for these persons AND we should use RGGI funds to make it possible to care for them.

I support RGGI and I hope you do too. Thank you for listening. God bless you.

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### **Bishop Dwayne Royster**

Good afternoon. I am Bishop Dwayne Royster, founding Executive Director of POWER, and I am here to stand in favor of PA joining RGGI with some key equity principles built in from the beginning. What matters to me most is that RGGI be constructed in a way that centers repairing past harms done to communities on the frontlines of the extractive fossil fuel economy and that RGGI invest in those same communities.

Reducing carbon emissions does not help all people equally. A general reduction of carbon over ten states, does not help the people, who often look like me, living next to a toxic fossil fuel plant that is spewing pollution into our lungs, or piling waste near where our children play. In fact we need to center the voices of people who have been excluded in the past, communities now identified by the Environmental Protection Agency as EJ, or Environmental Justice communities. Each community needs to be recognized as its own site and be individually tracked and analyzed with all data made transparent and public. This data should continuously inform the equitable implementation of RGGI. The places and people who have been targeted the most by the damage of the fossil fuel economy need the most investment in a Just Transition. We do need to have a carbon market to incentivize carbon reduction. And we need to do it in a way that wraps everyone into a healthy future. We need to make sure that once again the most marginalized communities are not excluded from solutions. We need our legislators and rule makers to prioritize the people who have born the greatest burdens of the fossil fuel economy. When our state adopts RGGI let's make sure we aren't perpetuating environmental racism and in fact we are finding community-driven solutions that work for everyone.

Enacting RGGI in a way that works for all Pennsylvanians means that every step of the way there needs to be transparency and public involvement, especially including Black, Brown, low-income, rural and other people who have traditionally been left out of governance.

Enacting RGGI in a way that works for all Pennsylvanians means that the rule makers need to be accountable to communities of real people, not to corporations and fossil fuel lobbyists.

{We appreciate that the DEP listened to our input about how to hold an inclusive public comment session: We asked not to have six- hour hearings during the working day that exclude people with jobs, people with childcare or caregiving responsibilities. Thank you for listening to this input from POWER and other equity groups and scheduling these public comments in a way that supports the participation of working people: having known time slots for speaking, having morning/afternoon and evening sessions and prioritizing diversity of speakers.}

We want our children to keep bringing children into this world and to continue to build the human legacy. We want our families to live and thrive without the fear that there may not be a stable world to even live in. It is our moral duty to eliminate our carbon

footprint, to protect our planet and to nourish the generations to come. RGGI is an enormous opportunity to reduce the destructive effects of carbon while investing in a regenerative economy future. Let's make sure RGGI is a plan featuring justice from the ground up. Thank you for listening.

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## Rev. Allen Drew

Hello, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak at this public hearing. My name is Rev. Allen Drew. I'm a Commissioned Pastor in the Christian Reformed Church, North America (CRCNA), I'm on the pastoral staff at Spirit and Truth Fellowship in the Hunting Park neighborhood of North Philadelphia, and I'm the East Coast Regional Organizer with the CRCNA's Climate Witness Project. I am speaking this morning as a representative of my Philadelphia church, my bi-national Christian denomination's climate organization, as well as a long list of \_\_\_\_\_ PA churches and \_\_\_\_\_ PA citizens. My list of endorsers is at the bottom of my written testimony, which I've submitted.

I am speaking this morning to emphatically support the affirmation and implementation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, in our state of Pennsylvania, along with a few adjustments.

RGGI is a crucial step in our collective fight against climate change. There is overwhelming international scientific consensus that the climate crisis is a grave global threat, not only to our environment, but to humanity and human civilization, with poor communities and nations bearing the heaviest burden. Our planet is steadily warming as a direct result of the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas and this warming is causing the intricate system of planetary dynamics to destabilize and cause an increase in fires, storms, heat, drought, flooding, disease, and crop failures. Here in PA, we're already experiencing an increase in heat and flooding as a direct result of the changing climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made it clear that if our planet warms above 1.5C above preindustrial levels, the results for our planet, for people, and for human civilization will be severe. We have already warmed to 1C above pre-industrial levels, so we have very little time left. Scientist have made it clear that in order to avoid passing above 1.5C, we must reduce global carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, get to net zero by 2050, and then get to net negative beyond that (meaning we are removing significantly more carbon from the atmosphere than we are putting in). The numbers don't lie – we are in a truly dire situation, and there is, quite simply, a moral imperative to act boldly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly here in PA, where the electric power sector produces the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest greenhouse gas emissions of all the states in the US. There is no more time to make small, incremental adjustments. We have to make major changes now.

RGGI is a really exciting way we can do this. Expert analysis shows that participation in RGGI will enable PA's carbon pollution to be cut by 21% by 2030, or 188 million tons. This is the equivalent of removing 4 million cars from the road during that period of time. Emissions need to be cut significantly more than this to reach our planetary goals, **but this is still a really important start**, and combined with other

growing efforts we'll hopefully be able to do our part in the critical 50% global carbon drawdown that must take place over the next 10 years.

RGGI could have a number of other benefits as well.

An in-depth analysis for the Department of Environmental Protection projects that RGGI will create 27,000 jobs for Pennsylvanians, add \$1.9 billion to the state's economy, and generate hundreds of millions of dollars annually to help eliminate air pollution, spur job creation, support working Pennsylvanians, and help workers in the fossil fuel industry successfully transition into the growing clean energy economy. While electricity rate increases are possible, in other RGGI states strategic allocation of revenue towards energy efficiency work has enabled consumers to save \$1 billion on their energy bills, increasing disposable income, which in turn has increased overall GDP. Furthermore, through reducing statewide pollution RGGI is expected to create \$6 billion in health benefits through 2030, 45,000 fewer asthma attacks, and 1,000 fewer cases of childhood bronchitis.

Finally, with a few strategic adjustments, RGGI could play an important role in strengthening environmental and economic justice for the poor. As people of faith, I and my community of endorsers believe it is our responsibility to stand with the most vulnerable among us. The impacts of pollution and climate change fall heaviest on those with the least. I live in Mt Airy, a middle-income community, and I do much of my faith-based organizing work in Hunting Park, a low-income community. I experience daily the stark differences in summer heat wave severity, tree canopy, green space, and corresponding health issues between these two communities. It is fundamentally unjust that two communities, both full of people just as amazing and deserving of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, should have such different experiences.

RGGI, however, could have a positive impact on communities like Hunting Park, if it works in a few strategic adjustments to its plan. We recommend that the final RGGI plan incorporate strategies that (1) direct a large portion of its revenue towards low and moderate income (LMI) family home repairs and weatherization, as well as greening projects in LMI communities; (2) include safeguards that protect LMI families from any electricity rate increases resulting from the program; and (3) ensure that dirty emitters are unable to move into low income neighborhoods to save money. With these adjustments, RGGI could make communities like Hunting Park greener, healthier, more energy efficient, and financially stronger.

And so, friends, the choice is clear. RGGI is not only a crucial step in our generation's fight against the climate crisis – it is also an incredible economic and health opportunity for PA, and by incorporating a few strategic adjustments to the plan, it can become a meaningful engine of environmental and economic justice in our great state.

Therefore I, along with all of the endorsers of this message, urge the Environmental Quality Board of PA make the adjustments recommended above, affirm RGGI, and pass it along to the Governor for implementation.

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### **Hugh Taft-Morales**

My name is Hugh Taft-Morales and I serve as Clergy Leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society located on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Thank you for this opportunity to

speak in support of Pennsylvania becoming a responsible partner in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

As clergy for a humanist denomination dedicated to living more ethical lives, I appeal to your moral conscience to seize this opportunity to do what is right. Those who resist RGGI may think the status quo is good enough. They may believe RGGI will weigh the energy industry down with impractical carbon caps and an unreasonable timeline. Neither is true. Please do not compromise your ethical principles or our collective welfare. Don't sacrifice long-term economic growth benefiting many for short-term profit benefiting few. I am asking you not to settle for doing what is possible. I am asking you to change what is possible.

RGGI would reset how we do business in Pennsylvania. Right now our state suffers from what ethicists call the **tragedy of the commons**. This term introduced nearly two centuries ago, explains that individuals acting out of narrow self-interest can gravely harm the common good by depleting shared resources. The resource we are focusing on today is a most precious and vital one: clean air. It is a fundamental part of our state's natural wealth. Let's live up to the legal and moral underpinnings of our Common-wealth.

We appeal to our regulatory and elected leaders to see how the interests of all – as individuals and as the collective – are served by protecting the shared resource of air. Let's keep our eyes on the prize by assuring that the funds raised through RGGI go to the *Clean Air Fund*, not to the state's general fund.

A key ethical value inherent to RGGI is equity. As we guide our state through an *inevitable* process of transitioning to sustainable energy, let's make sure everyone benefits. RGGI will help assure that the true costs of energy production are the responsibility of energy producers. When energy companies throw carbon into the atmosphere, while rewarding stockholders with short term profits, millions of citizens pay the price. Every citizen of Pennsylvania deserves clean air, and energy company stockholders deserve long-term sustainability and a clean conscience.

RGGI's commitment to a just transition to sustainable energy would benefit energy workers throughout the state adversely affected by pollution and the inevitable shrinking of the fossil fuels industry. The creation of green jobs would revitalize Pennsylvania's economic health and benefit unemployed citizens by adding an estimated 27,000 jobs in Pennsylvania by 2030. RGGI would help those suffering from asthma – as I do - and suffering from other respiratory challenges. RGGI would serve environmental justice by offering development opportunities to marginalized communities, as explained by the Center for Coalfield Justice. And RGGI would benefit future generations by slowing climate change. And RGGI would even benefit the energy industry by helping them focus on the long-game – assuring that energy companies don't miss out on the upcoming renewable energy boom.

Since the Environmental Rights Amendment of 1971, Pennsylvania's constitution has guaranteed that the people have a right to clean air and water. It has promised that the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic environmental resources are stewarded responsibly. Our constitution is the bridge between our ethical ideals and the practical necessities of managing our commonwealth. I am asking you to seize this historic opportunity.

Our political and regulatory leaders must also be ethical leaders. Rarely has such a moral path forward been so clear. Please lead us into a sustainable future by embracing RGGI as it has been put forward by the Pennsylvania Department of the Environment. Thank you.

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**Julie Greenberg**

Thank you for listening to ordinary people like me from across the state about the energy future that we want and need. I am the mother of five children in a multi-racial family and I know that all any parent wants is a good life for themselves and for their kids, whether the family is Black, Brown, or White, rich, poor or in-between, residents of a city, a suburb or a farm. In order to build the lives we want to live, we all need a stable climate. Therefore I am a strong supporter of RGGI because this plan can reign in the unbridled burning of fossil fuel that is destroying the possibility of healthy lives on a healthy planet.

I also want to say that RGGI must have strong equity features so that the least powerful people are not overlooked as it goes into effect. Simply reducing carbon across ten states is not enough to repair the harm that has already been done to Black, Brown and low-income communities in Pennsylvania. Our cap and invest market needs specific standards for repairing harm, monitoring site-based outcomes, loopholes and corporate evaders, and shepherding everyone, inclusively, into a renewable energy economy, including those who were excluded from the fossil fuel economy. Both community Visions and RGGI Results need to be studied and shared transparently. There must be power and flexibility in the hands of decision makers to alter the plan to meet goals of equitable outcomes.

My 24 year old son is a full-time solar panel installer. As a Latino young man who faces all the challenges of finding work, he now has this good-paying job with health benefits and a pathway of development. RGGI will create funds to invest in the kind of infrastructure that creates these good green jobs. During this transition, the voices of people most damaged by the fossil fuel economy must have a large voice in shaping its transformation.

No part of our human community can be sacrificed because we are too interconnected in a web of life that depends on each other and on this earth for sustenance. The fossil fuel economy allowed for some places and some people not to matter. With the right equity features RGGI can be part of a fair transition from that dirty and dangerous economy to an inclusive and regenerative economy that will help my own children, and everyone's children, thrive.

I look forward to hearing more about the exciting development of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in our state. Thank you for listening.