

## Testimony for RGGI for Independent Regulatory Review Commission

Good morning, I'm Pat Lupo, an Environmental Educator and Advocate for the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, I'm providing testimony on their behalf.



I teach at the Inner City Neighborhood Art House, an after school program. I Co-Chair PLEWA, the Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed Association and HECA, Hold Erie Coke Accountable and I am a member of other environmental and civic groups.

I am testifying because of my work with youth. Four young women approached me, they wanted to do something more about the issues impacting our earth. They have participated in Climate Strikes following in the footsteps of Greta Thunberg.

This part of my testimony is in their words, "You are our leaders and you need to do something. We are dealing with a system change not a climate change. As our leaders you need to unite behind the Science. Our scientists have told you for decades that our Earth is in trouble. In fact, Our House is on fire!

We are here today because like young people all over the world, we deserve a future. Do you understand, WE DESERVE A FUTURE!

We are the Fire Fighters, do Fire Fighters let the fire keep going or do they put it out? We need to save our home, we don't have decades, there are already people homeless because of Climate Change and our turn is coming. Let's save our home together.

We are asking all our Leaders," Are you with us?"

We are asking all Citizens in our Community, our State, the Nation and the World, "Are you with us."

I am submitting testimony today with many others because we, too, deserve a FUTURE. We have joined all the young people who are marching, we are marching for our lives and yes, we are marching for your lives!

These four young women, call themselves GAIA Youth United. They are Social Justice Advocates and we would do well to join them. I am so proud to be part of the group that is mentoring them, and in turn they empassion us.

The Science is clear on this. Climate Change is an imminent threat. Pennsylvania is the third largest greenhouse gas polluting state in the country. We rank second in the nation in fracked gas production and 3<sup>rd</sup> in coal production.

In 2015 Pennsylvania emitted more energy related carbon pollution then all but 23 nations. We have a responsibility, in fact a moral mandate to cut climate-warming pollution. We can do that if Pennsylvania joins RGGI.

RGGI is a proven solution to limit carbon pollution from power plants. At least ten states currently participate in RGGI in the Northeast; it is time for Pennsylvania to join them. Since the program began, RGGI has helped cut carbon pollution from power plants in half, even as the regional economy grew by nearly 10%.

RGGI provides the framework for Pennsylvania to invest in clean energy and energy efficiency programs to save people money and create jobs while addressing a changing climate by cutting carbon pollution.

The ultimate design and implementation of RGGI must also address the following Equity Principles:

This power carbon-reduction program must authentically and inclusively gather public input, especially in the EJ Community since they are the ones that suffer the greatest disadvantages. Stakeholder engagement must be robust.

RGGI must avoid and mitigate any adverse impacts on human health –especially in low-income communities and communities of color.

RGGI must equitably distribute environmental and economic benefits to EJ Communities that have faced historic injustice, severe economic harm, or demonstrated cumulative impact of environmental risk. Cumulative impacts must be a core principle in the permitting process.

The most vulnerable Pennsylvanians already do and will continue to shoulder the greatest burden from climate impacts, therefore the funds generated by RGGI should be reinvested in EJ communities in an equitable way.

RGGI works. Our neighboring states have shown joining RGGI will create jobs, save electric customers money and protect Pennsylvanian's health and our environment.

We have a responsibility, in fact a moral mandate to cut climate-warming pollution. We can do that if Pennsylvania joins RGGI.

Let's become the Fire Fighters! Let's join the GAIA Youth and the youth of the world who are fighting for their lives, for our lives and for the lives of future generations!

Thank you

Pat Lupo, OSB  
355 East 9<sup>th</sup> St Erie PA 16503  
[plupo@neighborhoodarthouse.org](mailto:plupo@neighborhoodarthouse.org)  
Benedictine Sisters Erie PA