

March 27, 2022

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives:

The undersigned members of the conservation, business, clean energy, environmental protection, healthcare, and faith communities in Pennsylvania **ask for your OPPOSITION to House Bill 637 (P.N. 594 - Rep. Struzzi)**, known as the “Energy Sustainability and Investment Act,” **as amended in the House Appropriations Committee on February 9, 2022** by Amendment #A03678.

Latest Amendment a Ploy By Opponents to Attack RGGI, Leave Communities Behind

HB 637 as amended is a dangerous bill that seeks to strip the Department of Environmental Protection of its authority to establish a carbon reduction program to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Moreover, the bill would also strip the Department of its authority to take *any* action whatsoever to control carbon pollution, a radical step backwards.

HB 637 and its amendment are insulting. This is an attempt by RGGI opponents to force communities impacted by the failure of fossil fuels to forfeit long-term future annuities from RGGI investments in exchange for a much smaller one-time payment. This is, by definition, a pay-off. Lawmakers are using a smoke-and-mirrors approach by dangling a one-time infusion of federal COVID relief monies in front of colleagues in an attempt to siphon support and votes away from a carbon reduction program in Pennsylvania like RGGI.

The amended HB 637 has been cast as a “compromise” on the RGGI fight, but it is a total surrender to polluters. It not only stops the state from participating in the successful and bipartisan Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative that will create jobs, cut dangerous pollution from power plants, and invest in energy efficiency that can reduce consumers’ energy bills, it practically guarantees polluters will continue to dump their waste in our air for free.

To be clear, there is absolutely nothing stopping our lawmakers from passing clean, stand-alone legislation to spell out how they want to invest RGGI pollution allowance revenue or alternative approaches to cut carbon pollution from power plants. In fact, several pieces of legislation have already been introduced by your colleagues in the General Assembly that would direct significant, ongoing funding to worker and community transition and workforce development.

HB 637, as amended by the House Appropriations Committee on February 9th, has nothing to do with good-faith efforts to protect our environment and conservation, and everything to do with a veiled attempt to kill a successful, bipartisan program we know will lower carbon pollution in Pennsylvania. We strongly oppose this amended legislation and will continue doing our part to ensure that a carbon reduction program becomes a reality in Pennsylvania. Science tells us that immediate and real action must be taken to reduce our carbon footprint before it’s too late to act. A carbon reduction program like RGGI will help us more easily reach those goals in Pennsylvania, while also providing a regular, annual infusion of up to \$800 million into Pennsylvania as a result of proceeds gleaned from the sale of pollution allowances.

Amending this bill to direct federal recovery dollars for methane reduction, flood mitigation and assistance for workers and communities does not make it palatable. Those are worthwhile uses of federal dollars, as well as RGGI proceeds, and should be enacted, but inserting into this otherwise harmful bill, after sitting on these federal dollars for over a year as the Commonwealth struggled through the pandemic, is pure political gamesmanship by RGGI opponents. If they truly believe in reducing methane pollution, protecting communities from flooding, and helping

communities manage the energy market transitions, they should pass those measures in a stand-alone bill. It's a shame some lawmakers only want to play political games instead of protecting Pennsylvanians and boosting our economic recovery.

Let's Move Forward & Reinvest in Our Communities

The RGGI program has an "invest" component which will yield even more benefits. Another analysis that looked at the actual effects of RGGI in currently participating states found that RGGI saved hundreds of lives, prevented tens of thousands of hours of lost work, led to strong net job creation, and resulted in an overall total of \$5.7 billion dollars in benefits. Pennsylvania's economy needs help now, and we are missing opportunities in the energy market's transformation to new and cleaner technologies. RGGI can create 27,000 jobs and will boost the state's economy by nearly \$2 billion.

Through the auction of carbon allowances under RGGI, as much as half a billion to 800 million dollars are projected to return to Pennsylvania annually that can—and should—be reinvested in our communities. In other RGGI states, significant amounts of money have been reinvested in energy savings and pollution reduction measures in low-income and environmental justice communities. Not only can we do the same in Pennsylvania, but our Commonwealth can also invest proceeds in clean energy projects, energy efficiency, infrastructure improvements, along with direct assistance to consumers, worker and community transition, and workforce development.

The General Assembly has the responsibility to defend the health of Pennsylvanians, especially children, and to provide an opportunity for sustainable living and prosperity, now and in the future. We are in the midst of the largest energy transition in our Commonwealth's history. This transition is reforming each segment of our economy. We cannot hang on to the past without continuing to lose family-bolstering jobs. Instead of a not-so-veiled attempt to prolong the status quo in the energy market, the General Assembly would better serve all Pennsylvanians through a bipartisan process that allocates RGGI funds to protect the health of our children and vulnerable communities, reduce pollution, and provide a revenue stream that could help workers transition into quality employment.

HB 637 is simply not in the best interest of our Commonwealth's citizens today and in the future. **We ask that you VOTE NO on HB 637 as amended by the House Appropriations Committee on February 9, 2022.**

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

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