

February 22, 2017

Dear Governors:

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) has delivered health and economic benefits for residents in the Northeast and has put the region on a clear path to a clean energy future. As you review the program and plan for its future, Consumers Union urges you to build on its progress and strengthen the program's goals to further reduce pollution and benefit the public.

RGGI's focused investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy, direct assistance for households struggling to pay their bills, and projects to reduce carbon pollution all work together to move the region toward a clean energy economy that is both equitable and economically efficient. Over the last eight years, the nine member states' participation in RGGI has:

- invested \$2.5 billion in clean energy and energy efficiency, which are projected to return \$4.67 billion in lifetime energy bill savings;
- cut carbon pollution from power plants in half, even as the economy expanded and GDP increased; and
- provided over \$5.7 billion in health benefits, including reducing premature deaths, asthma attacks and lost work days

The economic opportunities from low-cost solar and energy efficiency are enormous, and RGGI programs can help make sure these benefits reach more households. Reducing pollution hotspots and increasing community engagement in how RGGI revenues are distributed are essential for ensuring that the revenues are spent equitably and that disadvantaged communities are well-served by the program. Energy policy alone cannot undo economic inequality, but the RGGI program can help mitigate some of its brunt by expanding its programs that target underserved communities. In addition, RGGI's investments in energy efficiency and weatherization benefit the entire region, even households and businesses that do not participate. By lowering energy demand, utilities can defer or avoid the need for new generation, lowering costs for all ratepayers.

Since RGGI first began, the price of renewable energy has plummeted, and energy efficiency programs are even more effective. The time is right to increase the impact of the program and ramp up its investments and benefits. We urge you to strengthen the RGGI program to ensure it continues to deliver a win-win for consumers and clean air.

Sincerely,



Shannon Baker-Branstetter
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