



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers



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Good morning, Chairman Yaw, Chairwoman Comitta, Chairman Yudichak, Chairwoman Capelleti and members of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy, and Community, Economic, and Recreational Redevelopment Committees. My name is Kris Anderson and I work as a Representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Our organization represents roughly 44,000 members that live and work in Pennsylvania. Of that, we have around 1,500 members that work in the fossil fuel electric generation plants that would be negatively impacted by the State enrolling in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

We have seen a drastic reduction in jobs in the electric generation sector in neighboring states that have enrolled in RGGI. We can be assured Pennsylvania would suffer similar fate. Recently, given the uncertainty surrounding the state's RGGI enrollment, The Cheswick Power Plant has announced it will cease operations at the end of this month. With that announcement, 50 people will lose their job. Of those 50, 42 are IBEW members. As the smallest coal generation plant in the state, this number would be dramatically higher at any of the larger facilities, should we choose this path.

RGGI would be economically devastating to areas in Pennsylvania that can least afford it. The areas in which these plants reside already have higher unemployment rates and a lower median salary than the larger metropolitan areas of the state. Enrolling in RGGI would place these plants at an economic disadvantage and would eliminate the incentive to maintaining them, thus eliminating the few beacons of economic hope that are left in these parts of the state.

One of the biggest concerns we have with RGGI is the declining revenue that would be generated once the major revenue sources cease to exist. Once these power plants shutter, people will be forced from their jobs. Seeing the lack of economic opportunity in their community, and not receiving any assistance, these people will have no choice but to flee the state of Pennsylvania. This will further contribute to the population decline that we have seen over the past several generations.

It would be unfair to give these Pennsylvanians false hope with the promise of economic development with the proceeds from the tool that was used to execute their livelihood. These efforts have been attempted in various forms during the collapse of the steel industry through the 70's and 80's to no avail. Without these major economic hubs, there is little to no incentive to spur investment in these areas.

Throughout the whole RGGI process, the IBEW has been clamoring for a collaborative effort to meet the electric generation needs and the climate goals of Pennsylvania.

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Initially, Senate Bill 119 had bi-partisan support in its original form. In my opinion, it has been amended in a good faith effort to attract even more broad support. We are urging the legislature to come together to solve this problem while protecting the Pennsylvanians being unfairly targeted. We can accomplish the most aggressive of climate goals while not placing an undue hardship on hard working citizens of Pennsylvania.

The IBEW feels we can achieve our climate goals and ensure we have sustainable economic opportunities for the members of the community. We urge you to continue the open dialogue surrounding SB 119 so all concerns are heard, and we can place Pennsylvania at the forefront of energy production, while achieving our goals to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Sincerely,

Kristopher S. Anderson
International Representative

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