



Sign on Letter to Support Carbon Reductions in Virginia

July 26, 2017

We, the undersigned medical and health professionals and health advocates, are writing in support of the state's proposal to amend 9VAC5-140, Regulations for Emissions Trading Programs. The purpose of this proposed action is to formulate regulations to reduce carbon dioxide pollution from Virginia's power plants, and to ensure that Virginia's regulation is "trading-ready." A trading-ready regulation would allow for the trading of carbon dioxide allowances through a multi-state trading program.

We urge the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to develop regulations that support deep reductions in the allowable carbon emissions from power plants. A well-designed program to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants will allow Virginia to realize tremendous economic, environmental and public health benefits. Such a program will lead to reductions in the emissions of a large array of hazardous pollutants from coal-fired power plants, providing immediate public health benefits to the residents of Virginia. Evidence shows that a well-designed carbon reduction program will help reduce electricity bills, boost local economies, and create local jobs. Finally, reducing carbon emissions will help to slow the pace of climate change, which is a significant threat to public health and the economy of Virginia

This array of benefits has already been realized by the states that participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a program that has been reducing carbon dioxide emissions from power plants in Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states since 2009. Results show that RGGI has achieved an impressive reduction in pollution even as the economies of the member states grew. Between 2009-2014, the RGGI states received \$1.79 billion from the quarterly auctions of pollution allowances and have invested \$1.37 billion. Most of these funds were spent to increase energy efficiency and support renewable energy, which created 30,000 job-years and produced additional economic benefits. To date, investments in energy efficiency programs have saved consumers \$618 million on their electricity bills, and will provide future benefits of over \$4.5 billion as the investments in energy efficiency continue to save power.

By ensuring that the carbon regulation is trading-ready, Virginia will have the opportunity to join RGGI, should it choose to do so. One study estimates that by joining RGGI, Virginia could bring in \$2.8 billion of cumulative revenue by 2030.

This would mean more resources to protect Virginia's coastline, stronger energy efficiency programs, an increase in the use of clean, renewable energy, more jobs, and better health outcomes for Virginia residents.

For these reasons, we strongly support Virginia's efforts to amend 9VAC5-140, Regulation for Emissions Trading Programs.

Sources

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