



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH *All of God's Creation*

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, November 19, 2023

We Cannot Give Up on Our Right to a Healthy Environment in Pennsylvania and in Philadelphia

“The Commonwealth Court just issued a ruling that would prevent Pennsylvania from participating in a multi-state program designed to slash carbon emissions while raising funds to invest in cleaning up air pollution.

Now, Governor Shapiro and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) have **until December 1 to appeal** the Commonwealth Court’s decision and continue fighting for Pennsylvanians’ right to clean air and a healthy environment.” (Robert Routh, Senior Advisor, NRDC - *Natural Resources Defense Council* Action Fund)

In 2019, then Governor Wolf issued an executive order that directed Pennsylvania’s DEP to start the process for the state to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). **“The RGGI makes polluters pay for their carbon emissions, with the allowable amount of emissions lowered each year.** And it’s been highly successful for the 11 states already participating: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. They’ve raised more than \$6 billion for climate investments while reducing their carbon emissions by over 50%....

Pennsylvania has already missed out on \$1.5 billion that could have been invested back into our communities. That’s the amount polluters would have paid into the state’s Clean Air Fund since January 2022 had the courts not blocked Pennsylvania from participating in RGGI.” (NRDC)

Pennsylvanians have constitutional rights to "clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment" (Article 1, Section 27). “RGGI is the only state policy on the table that meets the Governor’s three-part test of protecting and creating energy jobs, taking real action to address climate change, and ensuring reliable, affordable power for consumers.” (Cindy Carr, *Sierra Club*, 11/1/23) [Show your support for taking this case to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.](#)

Another Polluter Exemption to Close

“For years, the Pennsylvania DEP has kept a rule on the books that **allows more pollution into the 27 miles of the Delaware that flow through Philadelphia** than they do anywhere else along the river.

The result of this ‘polluter exemption’? **Up to 15 billion gallons of untreated sewage and wastewater** are discharged into the Philadelphia section of the Delaware each year. This pollution can contain toxic substances, bacteria and viruses and result in intestinal infections, vomiting, fever, headache, and other illnesses.

With all these risks to increased pollution along Philadelphia's portion of the Delaware River, **it's time to close this polluter exemption.** [Add your name.](#) (*PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center*, 10/27/23)

Comments on this column may be directed to the Social Justice Committee at socialjustice@holycrossphl.org.