

April 18, 2011

**OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR CHRIS CHRISTIE
AND THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY:**

New Jersey took an important step in 2007 and joined 10 states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic to form the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). This innovative program is designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and in turn reduce global warming and other air pollution, cut energy costs for consumers and businesses, and create good-paying local jobs that cannot be shipped overseas. Launched by former Governor George Pataki (R-NY), the program brought together a wide array of business, consumer, and environmental stakeholders, as well as state officials.

The plan worked. A new report¹ out last month found that RGGI is achieving its goals and more. Due in part to its programs, global warming pollution in the region is down 15%-30% since it launched. And RGGI is directly responsible for creating or saving almost 18,000 jobs. Overall, because of RGGI, the economy in the region has grown by more than \$2.3 billion. With across-the-board benefits like these, it's not hard to see why there is bipartisan support for the program in all 10 participating states.

In New Jersey alone, the program has delivered real benefits to the environment and the economy. Companies that receive RGGI funds have been able to make energy efficiency improvements or build on-site clean energy projects. These projects help companies save energy and money and also support local jobs, putting people to work retrofitting buildings or installing solar arrays and other projects. Just the first 12 RGGI-funded projects in New Jersey helped in-state businesses generate over 167,000 megawatt hours of clean energy per year – equal to the amount of energy consumed by 19,600 households per year – and reduce annual carbon dioxide emissions by 84,000 metric tons.

Nautilus Solar WPU LLC received a grant from the NJ Economic Development Authority to install one of the largest solar energy facilities at a university in the U.S. Based at William Paterson University, the array will save the university \$4.3 million over the next 15 years. Another company, Mejour Betty LLC, received a loan to purchase solar panels for its 400,000 sq. ft. commercial building in Elizabeth. The project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 11,671 metric tons over its lifetime.

With RGGI's help, projects like these have helped New Jersey companies cut energy costs while reducing their carbon footprint. In addition to its direct economic benefits, RGGI has also helped lead to hundreds of clean energy businesses - both large and small - starting up, expanding or moving to New Jersey. These companies employ thousands of New Jerseyans in the growing clean energy market. This has helped position New Jersey as a hub in the emerging national clean energy economy, which will continue to bring more investment and jobs to the state.

As business owners and managers, environmentalists, civic and faith-based leaders, we believe RGGI is a crucial policy enabling New Jersey to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while spurring a clean energy economy. We urge the Governor and the Legislature to stand with us in support of this beneficial program, work in cooperation with other RGGI stakeholders to make the program as successful as possible, and ensure that New Jersey continues to lead the way toward a clean energy future.

¹ "Investment of Proceeds from RGGI CO₂ Allowances:"
http://www.rggi.org/docs/Investment_of_RGGI_Allowance_Proceeds.pdf

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