



January 27, 2021

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: The social, economic, and environmental case for a Climate Action budget

PO Box 202155

Harrisburg, PA 17120

[climatecaucus@pahouse.net](mailto:climatecaucus@pahouse.net)

#### Co-Chairs

Senator Steve Santarsiero

Rep. Danielle Friel Otten

#### Vice Chairs

Senator Carolyn Comitta

Rep. Nancy Guenst

#### Secretaries

Senator Amanda Cappelletti

Rep. Rick Krajewski

Dear Governor Wolf,

Nearly 70 percent of Pennsylvanians polled say they're already seeing the effects of climate change, and about the same percentage say they want lawmakers to do more about it. On behalf of the Pennsylvania Legislative Climate Caucus and in preparation for the 2021-2022 legislative budget season, we would like to request that Pennsylvania's budget framework be intentional in its efforts to address the three crises of our moment: racial justice, economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19, and advancement on climate action in Pennsylvania.

Over the past year, the circumstances of our commonwealth have taken a new shape. The challenges ahead of us are grand in scope and scale, and our solutions must match the moment. Budgets are moral documents, reflecting the vision, aspirations, and priorities of our commonwealth. Now more than ever, the choices we make must demonstrate both our understanding of our most pressing issues and our willingness to take bold steps toward solving them.

We are grateful for your work with the Department of Environmental Protection to protect Pennsylvania's air, land, and water from pollution and to provide for the health and safety of its citizens through a cleaner environment by entering into the RGGI Compact. We all want our lights to turn on when we flip the switch. We want vibrant communities supported by good, family-sustaining jobs for our workforce. In the year 2021, we know that we do not need to pit a healthy economy and utilities that keep the lights on against budget priorities and climate policies that protect our environment and our future generations.



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The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment. - **Article I Section 27 of the Pennsylvania constitution**



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Good climate policy **is** good economic and social policy, and a climate action budget can help us do even more to advance our commonwealth's economic, environmental, and racial equity goals.

This year presents a prime opportunity to adopt a Clean Energy Standard that will commit Pennsylvania to net-zero by 2050. We advocate restoring full funding for the Delaware River Basin Commission to do our part to protect the Delaware Watershed, which supplies drinking water to some 15 million people. Restore funding to DEP and ensure that the department can meet its Watershed Implementation Plan to protect the waters of Pennsylvania and the Chesapeake Bay. Protect environmental funds and make them more accessible to municipalities. Prepare the commonwealth for the transition to electric vehicles by investing in infrastructure. Accelerate transportation electrification by allocating Volkswagen settlement funds to prioritize electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, and electric bus replacement plans.

End public investments in new fossil fuel and petrochemical infrastructure that exacerbates climate change and holds us back from meeting our goals.

President Biden's Build Back Better plan prioritizes climate action as one of the key areas of focus for his new administration, committing to "meet the demands of science, while empowering American workers and businesses to lead a clean energy revolution." In the coming months, the Climate Caucus will present our own PA Climate Action Plan, with the goal of building a Commonwealth that is stronger, more resilient, more equitable, and more sustainable. We ask for your support and consideration of these priorities, and we look forward to working with you toward a final budget that centers the communities that have been disproportionately impacted and left

behind in the economic and environmental fallout of Pennsylvania's long history of extractive industry and considers the relationship between climate change and social, racial, and economic inequality.

The Pennsylvania Legislative Climate Caucus convenes to research, evaluate, discuss, and raise awareness about legislation, appropriations and related matters in ways that affirm evidence-based, peer-reviewed science, the acceptance that climate change is real and human-made, the importance of environmental justice, and the necessity for a renewable energy future. Further, the Climate Caucus operates to uphold the charge of environmental stewardship as laid bare in Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

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Sincerely,

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