

Good morning, my name is Tom Schuster and I represent the Sierra Club, which has nearly 24,000 members in Pennsylvania. I appreciate the opportunity to address this Committee today.

Climate disruption is becoming an ever more urgent issue. We've already seen the disastrous effects of extreme weather that can be made worse by climate disruption, including the devastation of Superstorm Sandy, severe droughts in the Midwest, and wildfires ravaging the western US. Pennsylvania is a major part of the problem, as the source of fully 4% of national and 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

But that also means we are a necessary part of the solution. We can help solve this problem by building a clean energy economy right here in Pennsylvania. Investing in clean energy like wind, solar and efficiency can help keep our families safe, healthy and prosperous. We can curb climate disruption, limit dangerous pollution in our air and water and create new jobs and industries in a clean energy economy that's built to last. The sooner we act, the easier this transition will be, and failure to do so will only result in greater destructive and costly impacts for the Commonwealth. We cannot afford delays.

It is for these reasons that our members are growing increasingly interested in the forthcoming update of Pennsylvania's Climate Change Action Plan. The original 2009 plan is ambitious enough to meet the challenge, if fully implemented. However, we have found little indication or documentation that any significant action has been taken to implement the recommendations in this plan. The progress the Commonwealth has made to date seems to be the result of legislation and initiatives that were begun before this plan was adopted. In the interests of transparency and accountability, we would like to see the updated plan clearly address what implementation steps have been taken to date and the results of those steps in terms of emissions reduction. In addition, we think improvements can be made to the plan by more clearly assigning responsibility for future implementation steps. Included in this should be greater clarity

regarding what the DEP and other administrative agencies can do in the absence of legislative action.

The GHG reduction targets identified in the update should be consistent with scientific recommendations regarding the rate of reduction necessary to stabilize the climate. It is very important that the updated plan project reductions beyond 2020, as that date is fast approaching. It is also important that the assumed implementation timelines are realistic, especially in light of the concerns I just mentioned about implementation to date.

We also want to caution against the reliance on expanded natural gas use as a way to lower GHG emissions. While it is true that gas emits less CO₂ during combustion than coal, there is growing evidence that the methane released during the gas production and distribution process cancels out much if not all of this benefit. We believe the DEP and EPA are underestimating the climate impact of natural gas, and that fugitive methane emissions must be better understood and independently verified before natural gas switching can be claimed as an effective climate stabilization measure.

We appreciate the opportunity to present some initial concerns, and look forward to participating in this important process. Thank you.