

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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Massachusetts Joins Regional States in Announcing Further Efforts to Combat Climate Change and Encourage Economic Growth

BOSTON – In a move that will accelerate state and regional efforts to combat climate change while continuing to grow the economy, Massachusetts today joined with eight other Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to [announce](#) a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond 2020. As the result of extensive RGGI program review conducted by the states over the last 18 months, the proposal calls for an additional 30 percent cap reduction between 2021 and 2030, relative to the RGGI 2020 levels.

“The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative builds upon the strong collaboration of nine diverse states committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting a clean energy economy in a regional, bipartisan manner,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “RGGI continues to be led by states that are collaborating to achieve state and regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and deliver overall climate change solutions.”

“Today’s announcement by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative will help Massachusetts continue to achieve short- and long-term emission reduction goals under the Global Warming Solutions Act while recognizing the benefits of an early transition towards clean energy,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “We look forward to working with our fellow Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative states to

reduce emissions, and continuing to use RGGI proceeds toward complementary state programs such as our Green Communities program that encourages municipalities to reduce their energy consumption through investments in new technology and energy efficiency.”

RGGI is the nation’s first market-based regulatory program to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the power sector through the auction of carbon dioxide (CO₂) allowances and the reinvestment of those proceeds in GHG reduction measures. The proposed program improvements include a new regional cap of 75.148 million tons of CO₂ in 2021, which will decline by 2.275 million tons of CO₂ per year thereafter, resulting in a total 30 percent reduction in the regional cap from 2020 to 2030. The RGGI states have already reduced power sector carbon emissions by nearly 50 percent since 2008, while generating more than \$2.7 billion in proceeds across the region for reinvestment in programs to benefit consumers and build a stronger and cleaner energy system.

“The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has a proven track record of delivering significant greenhouse gas emission reductions while fostering regional economic growth and accelerating the deployment of clean energy solutions,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew A. Beaton**. “The changes proposed to the RGGI program will lower the 2030 cap more than 65 percent below RGGI’s initial emissions cap, bolstering the Commonwealth’s progress to reduce emissions and implement comprehensive strategies called for by Governor Baker’s climate change executive order.”

Since 2008, Massachusetts has reinvested \$306 million in auction proceeds to increase the energy efficiency of residences and businesses, provide clean-energy solutions to 155 “Green Communities,” and to support the implementation of alternative energy resources. RGGI auction proceeds have helped Massachusetts earn the nation’s top ranking for energy efficiency six years in a row.

The program review effort included extensive feedback from stakeholders and experts gathered through eight public meetings and thousands of written comments. The RGGI states will seek additional stakeholder input on the draft program elements in a public meeting scheduled for September 25, 2017. Once final materials and a revised Model Rule are issued, states will follow their specific statutory and regulatory processes to propose updates to their CO₂ Budget Trading Programs.

“We look forward to completing the program review process in the near future,” **said Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Martin Suuberg**. “We will take the necessary steps to finalize the actions with our fellow states to ensure that we lock into place the reductions through 2030.”

“The Commonwealth is pleased to continue to work with our regional partners on a collaborative approach to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions,” **said Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Judith Judson.** “As Massachusetts continues to make historic commitments to clean energy, today’s announcement is an important step in creating a clean, affordable, and resilient energy future.”

The agreement builds on the strong regional partnership and demonstrated leadership on climate change and clean energy by the RGGI states. The terms of the proposed plan were developed collaboratively to ensure all nine states could move forward together with a shared commitment to achieving the most aggressive emission reductions possible while protecting ratepayers, growing local economies, and reinvesting auction proceeds in clean energy and climate change solutions.

“Maryland is committed to finding real bipartisan, common sense solutions to protect our environment and combat climate change,” **Maryland Governor Larry Hogan said.** “By working together, we are showing that we can find consensus to help protect our natural resources, promote clean energy, and grow our economy for current and future generations.”

“The Regional Green House Gas Initiative plays an important role in our regional efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support strong state economies,” **said Vermont Governor Phil Scott.** “Through this collaborative effort, Vermont and our regional partners in this initiative are better positioned to pursue our aggressive goals to reduce carbon emissions and commit to renewable energy, while keeping energy rates down and putting money back in the pockets of Vermonters.”

“New York leads the nation's efforts in strengthening climate security, and through the RGGI program and this latest bipartisan proposal to reduce emissions even further, the investment of proceeds will continue to support and create thousands of jobs and reduce electricity bills for residents,” **New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said.** “RGGI's success exemplifies New York's commitment to protecting the people of this state by showing the world that we will cut pollution and improve health, while transforming our economy into one that is cleaner, greener, stronger, and more sustainable than ever before.”

“As a coastal state, Rhode Island is uniquely vulnerable to climate change. Today, I'm taking executive action to endorse RGGI's stronger, regional approach to climate change,” **said Rhode Island Governor Gina M. Raimondo.** “Rhode Island is a leader. We're the only state in America with an off-shore wind farm, we're making it easier for homeowners and businesses to install solar, we're helping our cities and towns invest in green infrastructure, and we're working to make our energy system ten

times cleaner. RGGI plays an important role to make Rhode Island's energy system cleaner and our green economy stronger.”

Independent reports by the Analysis Group found that RGGI is generating billions of dollars in net economic benefit and tens of thousands of job-years in the region. Other studies have found that RGGI has saved hundreds of lives, prevented thousands of asthma attacks, and saved \$5.7 million in health-related economic costs.

Efforts through RGGI support the implementation of Governor Charlie Baker’s [Executive Order 569](#), *An Order Establishing an Integrated Climate Change Strategy for the Commonwealth* and emission reduction limits established by the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) of 2008. The GWSA requires a GHG emissions reduction of 25 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2020 and at least an 80 percent reduction by 2050. As of 2014, the Commonwealth had reduced emissions by 21 percent from 1990 levels, leaving about 4 percent remaining to achieve the 2020 goal. In early August, the Department of Environmental Protection [promulgated six new regulations](#) to ensure the Commonwealth is on track to meet its 2020 emission reduction limits. The Executive Order also directs the state to begin planning for climate change adaptation and working with cities and towns across the state to assess vulnerability and build resiliency to address climate change impacts.

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