

**Jennifer Roberts**  
**Former Mayor of Charlotte**  
**Charlotte Mecklenburg Climate Leaders**  
**Charlotte North Carolina**  
**March 25, 2022**

**North Carolina Mayors support RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative)**

Dear Governor Cooper and DEQ Secretary Biser,

We, the undersigned mayors, are writing to express support for **North Carolina to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)**, and to ask for your help and support in advancing this proven initiative. We are deeply appreciative of your recent Executive Order 246, focusing on reducing carbon emissions in the transportation sector, and we know climate action is a priority for your administration. Joining RGGI will reduce greenhouse gas emissions faster, avoid the worst impacts of climate change to our communities, and protect our people from the health and economic blows that the changing climate is dealing to our state.

Changing weather patterns are already affecting North Carolinians across our state. Tropical and non-tropical storm systems are bringing increasingly intense rainfall and damaging flooding, droughts are hurting farmers' crop yields, and wildfires are burning landscapes in western counties. Rebuilding from storms, floods and fires takes a heavy personal and economic toll. The same sources of pollution that are contributing to these climate impacts are imposing a daily toll on the health and wellbeing of our state's residents, increasing the incidence of asthma and other respiratory illnesses, especially among those living closest to power plants - often communities of color and lower-income people.

As local government leaders, **we have a responsibility to our cities, towns and counties** - and to all the residents and businesses who reside in our communities - to take action. We are working to reduce emissions at the local level, but there is only so much we can do without complementary policies at the state level. We are pleased to see that a plan is being developed at the NC Utilities Commission to reduce electric-sector carbon by 70 percent. RGGI is a proven policy pathway that can complement the NCUC-led effort, using existing pollution control measures to guarantee the decarbonization of the power sector, and should be part of our state's overall approach. Joining RGGI would provide an important regulatory foothold for the NCUC, in much the same way that pollution control rules adopted to implement our state's Clean Smokestacks Act guided the NCUC in delivering cost-effective power-sector pollution reductions in the early 2000s.

North Carolina does not have the luxury of time. **RGGI is a ready-to-implement option that can begin contributing to the solution immediately.** Our neighboring state of Virginia implemented RGGI just last year, and has already yielded \$237.6 million in revenue that local communities are using to strengthen flood resilience and equip low-income families with energy

efficiency measures. Virginia's success is consistent with other RGGI states, where carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector dropped 47 percent over the last decade, all while customer bills have declined faster than in states outside the program.

The power sector is the single largest contributor to carbon emissions, making it the single largest part of the solution to reducing emissions. North Carolina's own work on its Clean Energy Plan includes a report prepared by Duke University and UNC which found that RGGI was the most cost-effective of the major carbon-reduction policies considered. It is time for North Carolina to act on this data and the years of work that went into the Clean Energy Plan by expeditiously moving forward with joining RGGI.

We, the leaders of North Carolina local governments, urge you to fully support and advance the rulemaking approved by the Environmental Management Commission last summer to secure North Carolina's participation in RGGI. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help speed the implementation of this effort.

With thanks and urgency,

North Carolina's Mayors

Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer  
Carrboro Mayor Damon Seils  
Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger  
Former Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts  
Durham Mayor Elaine O'Neal  
Hillsborough Mayor Jennifer Weaver  
Pittsboro Mayor Cindy S. Perry  
Salisbury Mayor Karen Alexander