

OPPOSE HB1301 & SB532

Topic: Virginia's Participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

Bill Patron: Senator Richard H. Stuart

Reasons to Oppose HB1301 & SB532:

- These bills would repeal Virginia's participation in RGGI.
- RGGI is a successful regional effort to reduce pollution while directly helping communities on the front lines. Bipartisan legislation in 2020 directed Virginia to participate in RGGI. Virginia began participating in 2021.
- Virginia's participation not only reduces air pollution and improves public health, it also brings in critically needed funds. These funds are already helping thousands of low-wealth families reduce energy bills and climate impact, and localities deal with increasingly devastating floods.
- RGGI works and it is working for Virginia. Rolling back this successful program is exactly the wrong direction for Virginia—turning our back on a proven climate solution that is already directly benefitting Virginians all across the Commonwealth.

Overview:

- Regionally, RGGI has a long track record of success:
 - States have seen their emissions drop **90% faster** than the rest of the country.
 - The program has realized **\$5.7 billion in public health benefits** thanks to reduced air pollution. That means fewer asthma attacks, fewer premature births, and fewer missed days of school and work.
- Virginia is using the proceeds from the sale of carbon allowances to fund critically needed programs, directly benefitting Virginians in need:
 - **Virginia's RGGI proceeds fund low-income weatherization.** Weatherization professionals are hard at work repairing and weatherizing homes across the Commonwealth—homes that had been “deferred” from existing federal weatherization funding due to underlying issues. Thanks to RGGI proceeds, families are getting off the deferral list and finally getting the bill relief they need, while creating jobs for weatherization professionals and trade contractors.
 - **Virginia's RGGI proceeds fund efficient affordable housing.** With a shortage of at least 200,000 affordable housing units, Virginia's RGGI proceeds are creating thousands of high efficiency affordable housing units across the Commonwealth. 36 projects have been approved through just two rounds, representing more 2300 units.
 - **Virginia's RGGI proceeds help localities combat increasingly devastating floods.** Thanks to RGGI, for the first time ever localities all across the Commonwealth have access to dedicated state funding to perform critical flooding resiliency planning and projects. Two grant rounds have funded 49 projects all over the state, from Southwest Virginia, to the Valley, to Northern Virginia, to Hampton Roads.



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This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.