

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Fact Sheet for Virginia

Make Polluters Pay, Fight for Climate Justice

What is RGGI?

RGGI is an emissions reduction program that Virginia participates in with the coordination of 10 other East Coast states. RGGI caps the amount of carbon pollution that can be emitted by fossil fuel plants, reducing that number each year to keep us aligned with our climate goals and on track for a livable future. Virginia was the first Southern coal state to join, setting a precedent that our North Carolina neighbors may soon follow.

Why do we need it?

We can't meet our climate goals without it. Polluters are fighting tooth and nail to keep gas and coal plants alive. In 2020, we passed landmark legislation targeting 100% clean energy by 2050, but it will be impossible to hold polluters accountable on a year by year basis without yearly emissions reduction targets. That's why RGGI is key to our climate goals.

It funds essential climate programs. Because polluters dragged their feet for decades on transitioning to clean energy, we are already seeing the effects of climate change in Virginia. RGGI creates essential funding – already more than \$350 million in less than two years – for programs that advance coastal resilience and energy efficiency.

It attracts businesses to Virginia. The Commonwealth's participation in RGGI gives climate-minded businesses the confidence to invest in Virginia. In fact, Virginia's strong climate policies [are a chief reason why Lego](#) just decided to invest \$1 billion and over 1700 jobs in a new factory in Virginia.

What programs does it fund?

The Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF): 45% of RGGI proceeds go to the CFPF, which funds initiatives to reduce the impact of flooding in low-lying and coastal regions of the Commonwealth. Without RGGI, Hampton Roads and other coastal areas will be left largely undefended from sea level rise.

Low-income Energy Efficiency: 50% of RGGI proceeds fund new, efficient affordable housing units and the weatherization of existing low-income homes across the

Commonwealth. This is a triple win that reduces overall energy usage, keeps bills down, and creates more comfortable homes.

Who pays for RGGI?

The bottomline is that polluters pay for RGGI. That is why the fossil fuel industry is so desperate to get out of it. There is nothing in the RGGI legislation that creates a “tax” on energy users. Its fees apply directly to big polluters, and the cost of the program is less than 2% of overall energy spending.

Why is it currently under attack?

Governor Youngkin is aligned with fossil fuel interests and wants to take us back on climate. He tried to repeal RGGI through the General Assembly and to defund its programs through the budget. Because lawmakers stood up for our strong climate progress, both efforts failed. Now, he has tasked the Air Pollution Control Board with repealing RGGI. But **only the General Assembly has the power to remove Virginia from RGGI.**



Take Action: Keep Virginia in RGGI

Visit our online action page:

<https://bit.ly/3HZALIT>

To volunteer, contact organizer Zander Pellegrino, zander@chesapeakeclimate.org

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