

Enviro Groups Sue Christie for Pulling NJ Out of RGGI

by Barb Conover

In May 2100, Gov. Christie pulled New Jersey out of the ten-state carbon trading compact known as the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI). The program caps carbon emissions from electric power providers and allows those that exceed their targets in reducing pollution to sell their allotted carbon “allowances” to other companies at public auctions as an incentive to further reduce emissions. Environmental groups and the New Jersey legislature have been trying to reverse Christie’s withdrawal ever since.

Environmental groups have lambasted the governor for withdrawing the state from a program that is reducing harmful air pollution from power plants, making polluters pay for their emissions, and investing those payments in clean energy projects that grow the economy and further cut fossil fuel dependence. The legislature has twice passed bills to return NJ to RGGI (pronounced reggie), but the governor has already vetoed one of the bills.

On June 6th, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Environment New Jersey, joined immediately by Sierra Club, [went to court](#) against the state’s Department of Environmental Protection in



Superior Court in Trenton. The groups seek to reinstate New Jersey’s participation, arguing that the withdrawal was illegal because it was accomplished without adhering to the state’s administrative laws, which they say would require giving the public an opportunity to comment.

“Governor Christie unilaterally made his decision to leave RGGI – without taking any input from stakeholders or the public,” said Matt Elliott, clean energy advocate for Environment New Jersey. “His actions are not only bad public policy, but also illegal. To date, over 50,000 New Jerseyans have called or written their elected officials urging them to stand up for RGGI. And the Legislature has passed a series of measures affirming their support of the program.

And yet, the governor refuses to listen, and insists on ignoring the people and their elected representatives. We won’t stand by and let this happen.”

Study after study shows RGGI is working just as it was designed. Region-wide, it has created 16,000 job-years’ worth of work. It has generated more than \$1.6 billion of economic activity, and has helped achieve a 23% reduction in harmful air pollution that inflames cardiovascular health problems in adults and children and contributes to climate change. ☹️