



# Senate moves new bill to keep Pa. out of RGGI without General Assembly's OK

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State lawmakers are advancing a new attempt to prevent the commonwealth from joining a regional cap and trade program targeting power plant emissions.

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee on Tuesday passed Senate Bill 119 along party lines. The measure requires legislative approval to enter a program that puts a price

Gov. Tom Wolf is trying to join RGGI through a regulation, which could be finished later this year. He [vetoed < https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2020/09/24/wolf-vetoes-bill-that-would-keep-pennsylvania-out-of-rggi/>](https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2020/09/24/wolf-vetoes-bill-that-would-keep-pennsylvania-out-of-rggi/) a similar bill last year. Spokeswoman Elizabeth Rementer said he will veto this bill if it reaches him.

She added the Department of Environmental Protection “is authorized to control carbon emissions under the authority of the Pennsylvania Air Pollution Control Act– authority that was granted by the legislature.”

The vote marks the [second < https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2021/04/27/in-rggi-fight-escalation-gop-blocks-wolfs-nominations-to-utility-regulator/>](https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2021/04/27/in-rggi-fight-escalation-gop-blocks-wolfs-nominations-to-utility-regulator/)

move within a week by Senate Republicans to try to keep Pennsylvania out of RGGI. Last week, they told Wolf they wouldn’t approve his nominations to the Public Utility Commission unless he backed off RGGI. He said he wouldn’t.

Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming) called joining a superficial, feel-good effort that will have little impact on global emissions.

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Many Republicans and some Democrats are opposed to RGGI because it will likely hasten the decline of coal-fired power plants and could hurt surrounding communities. The bill's sponsor, Sen. Joe Pittman (R-Indiana), said the administration has not engaged with affected communities or offered a plan for how to help them.

Wolf's office rejected that claim and said DEP has met with several stakeholders, including coal plant operators and legislators.

Opponents also say it will raise electricity rates. DEP modeling projects a slight increase in prices in the first years of RGGI.

Supporters say RGGI is an important way for the state to address climate change that could help the overall economy. They point to the 11 northeastern states in RGGI that have cut emissions from the power sector faster than the rest of the country, while their economies grew.

Sen. Carolyn Comitta (D-Chester) noted coal jobs are already disappearing.

"Coal fired plants are not closing because of RGGI, but due to competition from

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