



Clinician Support for Executive Directive 11

On behalf of over 200 doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and students across our state, Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action submits this letter in support of Executive Directive 11. We ask that this program be designed to significantly reduce carbon emissions and increase renewable energy capacity relative to current levels in order to protect public health, with a focus on vulnerable populations.

A warming world poses significant risks to human health from extreme weather events, heat illness, air pollution related asthma, allergies, food and water contamination and infectious diseases. These effects are felt disproportionately in vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly and the disadvantaged.

Climate change related health effects are being experienced by Virginians today and are expected to become more apparent as the climate continues to warm. For example, the date of the peak tree pollen count in Richmond now occurs one week earlier and is 50% higher than in the 1980's. Warming winters are creating ideal conditions for tick survival, reproduction and disease transmission. This has contributed to a 2-14 fold increase in reported cases of tick-borne diseases between 2006-2015. Summer heat is becoming more oppressive, placing more Virginians at risk of heat stroke or heat exhaustion. Between May and August of 2016, 1700 Virginians were treated in Emergency Rooms for heat related illness.

For the reasons stated above, clinicians throughout Virginia support reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Commonwealth in order to avert further climate warming that threatens our health and safety. Executive Directive 11 is a strong step towards transitioning Virginia to the clean energy economy necessary to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases and other harmful air pollutants.

The nine RGGI participating states have already experienced significant public health benefits and between \$3 billion and \$8 billion in health cost savings as a result of decreased air pollution associated with the program. According to ABT Associates, as a result of participating in RGGI between 2009-2014, these states have avoided:

- 300-830 Premature Adult Deaths
- 35-390 Non-Fatal Heart Attacks

- 420-510 Cases of Acute Bronchitis
- 8,200-9,900 Asthma Exacerbations
- 13,000-16,000 Respiratory Symptoms
- 180-220 Hospital Admissions
- 200-230 Asthma ER Visits

Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action applauds former Governor McAuliffe, Governor Northam, the Department of Environmental Quality, and citizens of Virginia for moving the Commonwealth towards a cleaner and healthier future.

Thank You,

Samantha Ahdoot, MD, Chairperson, Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action