

Opportunities for Coal Plant Communities in Pennsylvania

The Ohio River Valley Institute (ORVI) examined how the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) could support economic development and job creation in coal and gas communities. Eight case studies, including six from RGGI states, show how resources can be used to boost communities affected by energy market changes.



Costly coal-fired power plants are being replaced by gas and other forms of energy across the U.S. and in Pennsylvania – coal's share of electricity generation fell from 57% in 2001 to 17% in 2019.

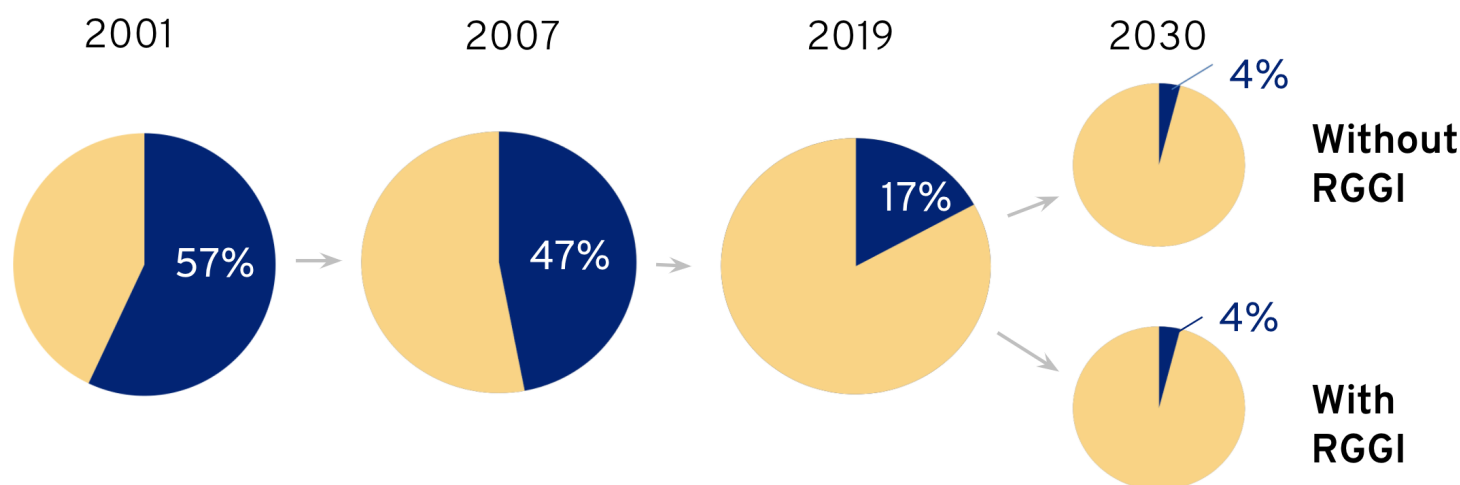


Coal-powered electricity will plummet to 4% of electric energy in Pennsylvania by 2030, with or without RGGI.



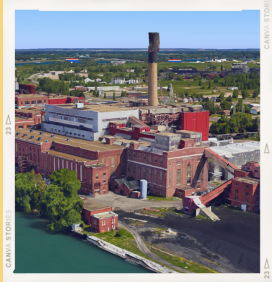
PA currently has no state program in place to address the economic impacts of coal plant closures and conversions.

Coal-fired Power As Share of All Electric Power Production in Pennsylvania



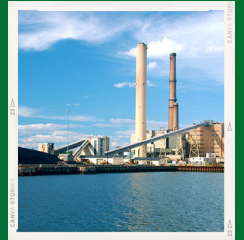
If done right, RGGI proceeds can be invested into programs to support local coal plant communities, including:

- replacing local tax revenues to support schools and municipalities;
- supplemental funding for state job training & placement for displaced workers; and
- assistance for local community planning, project development and support for public-private community investment strategies.



Tonawanda NY (RGGI state). RGGI and other funds supported a plan by residents, community groups, organized labor, and local businesses to re-grow the local economy; the cleanup and redevelopment of the coal plant site; and a cash infusion to help the Tonawanda community sustain its tax base while the transition took hold. These efforts led to an \$122 million investment by Sumitomo Rubber Industries in its Tonawanda manufacturing plant adjacent to the former coal site, and transformation of the former to attract new industries, such as solar technology and warehousing.

Salem, MA (RGGI state). With the closure of the Salem Harbor Power Station, a local task force of elected officials, state agencies, utilities, and labor was formed to plan remediation and reuse of the site. That process resulted in 20 acres being used for a gas-fired power plant, with planning moving forward now on the remaining 40 acres, to be split between a maritime uses like a transmission hub or staging area for offshore wind-energy and mixed-use residential and commercial development.



Centralia, WA (Non-RGGI state). In Washington state, a \$55 million Centralia Coal Transition Grant program funded education and retraining for workers and economic development projects to create jobs, as well as weatherization energy efficiency upgrades for families and local energy technology investments. After years of lagging behind the national economy, Centralia has increased jobs at a greater pace than the country in the years after the \$55 million was in place.

Pennsylvania Is Faced With A Critical Choice:



Adopt RGGI and use the proceeds to usher in a more equitable and prosperous transition in coal plant communities across the Commonwealth.



Reject RGGI and allow market forces to continue to shutter coal plants without funding to cushion job loss, site cleanup costs, and budget shortfalls.