

# Policy

# Toolkit

A guide to climate policy



**The  
Climate  
Initiative**

Pennsylvania

# Introduction

Hello!

My name is Javan Santos and I am the Policy Manager for The Climate Initiative. Through these policy toolkits, I hope to show youth that policy can be simple and accessible for young people who are passionate about making change in their community. I started writing policy when I was in high school and have worked in policy for almost seven years now. The experience and knowledge from those years are poured into these toolkits for youth to use to make a difference in climate advocacy. Whether you are hoping to analyze policy, talk to a policymaker, or learn about what it takes to turn an idea into a law, I hope that you will learn something helpful in the resources these toolkits provide.

After you learn the fundamentals of navigating policy, this toolkit also comes with a run down of several different state-specific policy tools. In it, you'll find a history of climate policy in your state, legislators that are supportive of climate policy according to organizations within your state, and other useful information. Climate advocacy is not easy, and there is so much at stake for youth if nothing is done. My hope is that these toolkits will provide you all you need to make much needed change in your state and your community!

If you have any questions or thoughts on how we at The Climate Initiative can help your advocacy, please feel free to reach out to me at: [javan@theclimateinitiative.org](mailto:javan@theclimateinitiative.org)

*Javan*

Javan Santos  
Policy Manager



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# Pennsylvania Policy Landscape

Pennsylvania is a state that has deep roots in environmentalism and the fossil fuel industry simultaneously. The first conservation law in Pennsylvania was actually established in 1681, when William Penn required land buyers to preserve one acre of land for every five acres cleared. Pennsylvania is also historically recognized for having the nation's first oil well in Titusville, PA. This tie with the fossil fuel industry has made passing climate policy difficult but not impossible in the state, as the state has had some environmental wins. There's always room for more improvements to climate policy and this toolkit will arm you with the knowledge you need to tackle it within your state.

## Pennsylvania Climate Change Advisory Committee

- The Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC) is the committee responsible for providing advice to Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection, as mandated under the [Pennsylvania Climate Change Act of 2008](#).
- It has 18 appointed members and 3 ex-officio members.
- The advice they must provide includes but is not limited to:
  - The development of a climate change action plan ("Action Plan")
  - Annual greenhouse gas emission inventories
  - Climate change impacts assessment report
  - Voluntary greenhouse gas emissions registry
  - Other climate change related activities that the DEP might request

# Pennsylvania's Climate Action Plan Strategy

Pennsylvania's 2021 Climate Action Plan is an updated version of the 2018 Climate Action Plan. Pennsylvania is required to update this plan every three years, so there is opportunity to push for even more ambitious climate strategies by 2024. You can find more information at the [link here](#). Found below is a summary of the strategies in the 2021 plan.

## Goals:

- 26% lower by 2025
- 80% lower by 2050

## Strategies:

- Start now and Implement in 5 years
  - Institute the most up-to-date building codes for energy efficiency.
  - Improve residential and commercial energy efficiency (electricity and gas).
  - Increase distributed on-site solar energy. Increase industrial energy efficiency and fuel switching.
  - Use programs and incentives to increase energy efficiency for agriculture.
  - Incentivize use of distributed combined heat and power.
  - Keep nuclear energy generation at current levels.

# Pennsylvania's Climate Action Plan Strategy

- Start now and implement in 10 years
  - Incentivize building electrification.
  - Increase fuel efficiency of light-duty vehicles and reduce vehicle miles traveled for single-occupied vehicles.
  - Increase use of light-duty electric vehicles.
  - Institute a low-carbon fuel standard to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels.
  - Increase capture of biogenic methane from non-fossil sources, including animal manure, food waste, and landfill gas, for use in by commercial and industrial properties.
  - Reduce fugitive methane emissions from fossil fuel extraction industries such as oil and natural gas operations.
  - Provide training and tools for agricultural best practices.
  - Increase land and forest management to increase carbon absorption.
- Start now and implement in 10+ years
  - Implement a multi-state Memorandum of Understanding to make all medium and heavy-duty vehicle sales zero emissions vehicles by 2050.
  - Establish a carbon emissions-free grid.

# Pennsylvania and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

- The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is an agreement between 11 East Coast states to regulate the greenhouse gases emitted by fossil fuel burning power plants.
- It is a cap and trade system, meaning that the state and the region agree on a cap of how much carbon can be produced between these states, and then the power plant companies must bid on allowances.
- Every year since 2009, the cap has slowly decreased except for 2021, when Virginia joined and the cap increased (It's possible that once Pennsylvania joins the cap will increase again).
- Each State auctions off their own carbon allowances and can use that money to re-invest into the local community.
- Pennsylvania is the only state in the Initiative to join by executive order instead of through law. This means that a future governor could be elected that could remove Pennsylvania from the Initiative.
- Pennsylvania State legislators tried to pass a law to prevent Pennsylvania from joining and failed, Pennsylvania's Senate passed a resolution instead. (See Getting Started Toolkit pg. 3 for difference between a bill and resolution).
- Pennsylvania Senate was one vote shy of a vetoproof majority on this resolution. This resolution has not been voted on in the House. (Because this resolution relates to an executive order, it can be vetoed).
- There could be an opportunity to advocate for joining the RGGI and for it to be passed into law instead of by executive order!



# Currently Enacted Laws

## Keystone Tree Fund Legislation

- Sponsored by Garth Everett (R)
- Approved by Governor November 7, 2019
- Allows people to add a voluntary three dollar donation to the Keystone Tree Fund when they register their vehicle, which goes to the preservation of Pennsylvania forests.

## Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (C-PACE)

- Sponsored by Senator John Blake (D)
- Approved by the Governor June 12, 2018
- Allows cities and counties to offer financing to their local businesses to be used for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and water conservation.
- Allows these businesses to pay off this low-interest, long term financing as property tax.



# Bills Not Enacted: Pending

## 100% Renewable Energy by 2050

- Introduced by Representative Rabb (D)
- Mandates that the state be 100% renewable by 2050
- Establishes five new government programs to facilitate this
  - The Renewable Energy Transition Task Force
  - The Just Transition Community Advisory Committee
  - The Renewable Energy Center of Excellence
  - The Council for Renewable Energy Workforce Development
  - The Renewable Energy Workforce Development Fund

## Growing Greener III Act

- Introduced by Senator Gordner (R)
- Uses \$500M from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act to fund and expand the Growing Greener Act. See Pennsylvania State Policy History, pg. 12 for more info on the Growing Greener Act.

## LD Natural Gas Severance Tax

- Introduced by Representative Christopher Quinn (R)
- Governor Wolf supported a Natural Gas Severance Tax as of Feb 25, 2021
- Taxes the amount of natural gas pulled out of the ground per unit of gas at a rate varying on the price per unit.
- Pennsylvania is the only state that does not have a severance tax.

## Statewide Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban; County Opt-In for Paper Bag Fee

- Introduced by Senator John P. Sabatina Jr. (D)
- Bans stores from distributing plastic bags throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

# Pennsylvania Climate Leaders

In Pennsylvania, the climate leaders to know are the Pennsylvania Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC). The CCAC serves as the advisory committee mandated under the Pennsylvania Climate Change Act (PCCA) to provide advice to the Department of Environmental Protections regarding the implementation of the provisions of PCCA. Notably this body is instrumental in developing the Climate Action Plan, which was recently updated in 2021 and is mandated to be updated every three years.

## Members of the PA Climate Change Advisory Committee

### Co-Chairs

- A. Steven Krug, King Architects, Chair
- Marc Mondor, AIA - Evolve Environment Architecture - Vice-Chair
- Terry Bossert - Post & Schell, Attorneys-at-Law - Appointed Member
- Zachery C. Smith - CNX - Appointed Member
  - Rachel Gleason - Pennsylvania Coal Alliance - Delegate for Smith
- Rep. Sara Innamorato - Pennsylvania House - Appointed Member
- Alissa Burger - Electrification Coalition-Appointed member
  - Sam Lehr - RNG Coalition - Delegate for Burger
- Lindsay Baxter - Duquesne Light Company - Appointed Member
- Luke Brubaker - Dairy/Poultry/Crop Farmer - Appointed Member
  - John J. Bell -PA Farm Bureau - Delegate for Brubaker
- Robert Graff -Office of Energy and Climate Change Initiatives - Appointed Member
- Zakia M. Elliot - Sierra Club - Appointed member
  - Jennifer Quinn - Sierra Club - Delegate for Elliot

# Members of the PA Climate Change Advisory Committee Cont.

- Zakia M. Elliot - Sierra Club - Appointed member
  - Jennifer Quinn - Sierra Club - Delegate for Elliot
- Rep. Steve McCarter - Pennsylvania House - Appointed Member
  - Rep. Ben Sanchez - Pennsylvania House - Delegate for McCarter
- Patrick Henderson - Private Citizen - Appointed Member
- Gary Merritt - Northern Star Generation Services Company - Appointed Member
  - Jason Kelso - Reading Anthracite Company - Delegate for Merritt
- Jim Felmlee - Private Citizen - Appointed Member
- Jaret Gibbons - Anthracite Region Independent Power Producers Association - Appointed Member
  - Cristy Sweeny - Anthracite Region Independent Power Producers Association - Delegate for Gibbons
- Rep. Daryl Metcalfe - Pennsylvania House - Appointed Member
- Glendon King - Pennsylvania House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee - Delegate for Metcalfe
- Kemberly Kipin-Mcdonald - Arconic (Steel Mill) - Appointed Member
- Paul Morris - Blackhawk Energy - Appointed Member

It's important to know the leaders of the state you're in to inform your climate advocacy, so found below is a list of the leaders of the governments in Pennsylvania.

## Legislative Branch

Governor Tom Wolf (D) Governor since 2015

Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman (D) Lieutenant Governor since 2019

### Pennsylvania Senate:

- 50 Members in the State Senate elected to four year terms
- 203 members in the State House elected to two year terms
- Republican majorities in both
- Speaker of the House Bryan Cutler (R)
- House Minority Floor Leader Joanna McClinton (D)
- Senate President Pro tem Jake Corman (R)
- Senate Minority Floor leader Jay Costa (D)

### Pennsylvania Courts:

- Court of Common Pleas have original jurisdiction and hear civil cases under \$7K, and things like family, juvenile and estate law
- Municipal courts in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh
- Magisterial district courts handle municipal court matters and civil claims under \$12K
- Superior (Appellate) court in Pennsylvania tends to be the higher court to appeal common pleas and other issues from lower courts
- The Commonwealth court is a nine-judge court that is limited to appeals from certain state agencies and cases involving public sector legal questions and government regulation
- The Supreme Court is the last resort court for state level matters

# Key Climate Officials

Identified with data from Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania, Sierra Club Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), this list will highlight legislators climate advocates in Pennsylvania should know using resources from state level organizations. We will provide summaries of legislation they have proposed and/or their grade from the Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania (CVP), with 100 being the score that means they support all key environmental policy according to CVP, and a 0 meaning they supported none.

## State Legislators and their Track Records:

- Rep. James Struzzi (R-PA-062)
  - Authored HB 637 which Sierra Club Pennsylvania and PEC oppose.
  - HB 637 mandates legislative approval for joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, effectively stalling it in committee
  - Has a 0 as a 2019-2020 Score and a 0 lifetime score from CVP Scorecard
- Rep. Aaron Kaufer (R-PA-120)
  - Introduced H.B. 1555 which Sierra Club supports
  - Allows community solar, expanding the options for solar generation in the state of Pennsylvania
  - Has an 8 as a 2019-2020 score and a 16 as a lifetime score from CVP Scorecard
- Rep. Christopher Quinn (R-PA-168)
  - Introduced H.B. 1080 which Sierra Club supports
  - Increases Pennsylvania's Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard, though not the most ambitious bill to do so
  - Has an 82 as a 2019-2020 score and an 88 as a lifetime score, the highest score for a Republican representative on the CVP Scorecard
- Rep. Joseph Petrarca (D-PA-55)
  - Lowest score of Democrats, on CVP Scorecard with a 38 for a 2019-2020 and a 59 for the lifetime score

# Key Climate Officials Cont.

## State Legislators and their Track Records:

- Rep. Brian Sims (D-PA-182)
  - Current rep and candidate for Lieutenant Governor
  - Authored the most bills (4) with support from Sierra Club Pennsylvania, three bills relating to energy efficiency and a fourth bill incentivizing the installation of green roofs
  - Has a 100 for a 2019-2020 Score and a 92 as a lifetime score
- Rep. Tim Briggs (D-PA-149)
  - Has a 100 for a Lifetime and a 2019-2020 score, having represented since 2009
  - Introduced a bill supported by Sierra Club Pennsylvania, a polystyrene/styrofoam ban on take-out containers (not including egg and meat containers)
- Sen. John Yudichak (I-PA-014)
  - Has a 38 2019-2020 Score and a 70 Lifetime Score, was a former Democrat, but is now Independent and Caucusing with Republicans
  - Introduced a bill supported by Sierra Club Pennsylvania and PEC that expands the C-PACE financing (see General Overview) to multifamily dwellings, allowing more businesses to access this funding for more sustainable practices
- Sen. Carolyn Comitta (D-PA-019)
  - Has a 100 Lifetime score from her time in the Pennsylvania House
  - Authored a bill supported by Sierra Club Pennsylvania and PEC that allows flexibility to the money collected from fossil fuel companies under the regional greenhouse gas initiative

# Pennsylvania State Policy

## History

Found below is a history of some of the most noteworthy climate and environmental laws passed by the state of Pennsylvania.



### Climate Change Act of 2008

- Introduced by the late Senator Erikson (D)
- Signed by Governor Rendell on July 9, 2008
- The foundation of climate change policy in the State of Pennsylvania
- Created the Climate Change Advisory Committee
- Mandated the Climate Change Action Plan, as well as mandating it to be updated every three years
- Mandates an annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions to be reported by the State of Pennsylvania

## Growing Greener Act I and Act II

- Two large spending bills that created the Environmental Stewardship Fund (ESF), a fund that would give local grants in order to:
  - Slash the backlog of farmland-preservation projects statewide
  - Protect open space
  - Eliminate the maintenance backlog in state parks
  - Clean up abandoned mines and restore watersheds
  - Provide funds for recreational trails and local parks
  - Help communities address land use; and
  - Provide new and upgraded water and sewer systems
- Growing Greener Act I appropriated an initial sum, then increased landfill tipping fees to pay for these projects
- Growing Greener Act II was supposed to be paid with general fund bonds but instead is paid with ESF funds
- The ESF also has been used to offset operating expenses
- Growing Greener III has been introduced and would use American Rescue Plan funds (see General Overview Bills Pending Section)
- Growing Greener Act Pennsylvania 1 and 2, Possibly Three



# Bill Guide

PRINTER'S NO. 542

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## HOUSE BILL

No. 579 Session of 2021

INTRODUCED BY SHUSTERMAN, HOWARD, HANBIDGE, SCHLOSSBERG, HILL-  
EVANS, MADDEN, CIRESI, SIMS, N. NELSON, STAMBAUGH,  
PISCIOTTANO, LEE, SAPPEY, INNAMORATO, FREEMAN AND ROZZI,  
FEBRUARY 22, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,  
FEBRUARY 22, 2021

### AN ACT

1 Providing for the return of beverage containers and for the  
2 powers and duties of the Department of Environmental  
3 Protection; imposing a returnable beverage container  
4 assessment on distributors; providing for duties of  
5 returnable beverage distributors; establishing the Returnable  
6 Beverage Container Fund; and providing for a returnable  
7 deposit value on returnable beverage containers, for  
8 redemption of empty returnable beverage containers, for  
9 redemption centers, for payment of claims from the fund and  
10 for annual report to General Assembly.

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12 Section 1. Short title.  
13 Section 2. Definitions.  
14 Section 3. Returnable beverage container assessment on  
15 distributors.  
16 Section 4. Returnable beverage distributors.  
17 Section 5. Returnable Beverage Container Fund.  
18 Section 6. Inventory report.  
19 Section 7. Returnable deposit value of returnable beverage  
20 containers.

## Bill Number

Tells you which chamber the bill is from & assigns a number for easy reference. The State of PA has two numbers: either HB (House Bill) or SB (Senate Bill) telling you which chamber the bill was introduced in.

## Sponsor Line

Tells you who the primary sponsor is, or which legislator is leading the push for the bill. It also lists cosponsors / other legislators who support the bill.

## Committee Referral

Tells you which committee the bill has been referred to, which is helpful to know to find info such as when a public hearing is or which legislators need to be persuaded to get the bill passed.

## Bill Title

Describes what the bill hopes to achieve, is usually a summary of the bill as a whole.

# Bill Guide

1 Section 8. Sales of beverages in returnable beverage  
2 containers.

3 Section 9. Returnable beverage container requirements.

4 Section 10. Redemption of empty returnable beverage containers.

5 Section 11. Redemption centers.

6 Section 12. Development of procedures.

7 Section 13. Refusal of refund value payment for a returnable  
8 beverage container.

9 Section 14. Claims for reimbursement from the fund.

10 Section 15. Redemption center reporting.

11 Section 16. Departmental inspections.

12 Section 17. Annual report to General Assembly.

13 Section 18. Regulations.

14 Section 19. Effective date.

15 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
16 hereby enacts as follows:

17 Section 1. Short title.

18 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Returnable  
19 Beverage Container Act.

20 Section 2. Definitions.

21 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
22 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
23 context clearly indicates otherwise:

24 "Beverage." Any of the following:

25 (1) Soda water or similar carbonated soft drink.

26 (2) Noncarbonated drink, including, but not limited to,  
27 mineral water, flavored and unflavored water, spring water,  
28 vitamin water and any other water beverage, tea, sports  
29 drink, isotonic drink, beer and other malt beverages.

30 (3) Any other nonalcoholic carbonated and noncarbonated

## Line Numbers

Line numbers are required in every section of the bill to allow for easy reference.

## Short Title

A non-technical name given to a bill, usually an easy way to brand and market a bill to the general public

## Definitions Section

A list of terms that will be used throughout the bill and their exact meaning for the purposes of this bill.

# Bill Guide

1 does not include an airline or shipping company that merely  
2 transports returnable beverage containers.

3 Section 3. Returnable beverage container assessment on  
4 distributors. 

5 (a) General rule.--Beginning January 1, 2022, a returnable  
6 beverage distributor shall pay to the department, on a monthly  
7 basis, a returnable beverage container assessment on each  
8 returnable beverage container manufactured in or imported into  
9 this Commonwealth. The returnable beverage container assessment  
10 shall not apply to returnable beverage containers exported for  
11 sale outside of this Commonwealth.

12 (b) Amount of assessment.--The returnable beverage container  
13 assessment shall be 5¢ per returnable beverage container and may  
14 be imposed only once on the same returnable beverage container.

15 (c) State preemption.--No municipality may impose or collect  
16 an assessment or fee on returnable beverage containers for the  
17 same or similar purpose as provided under this act.

18 Section 4. Returnable beverage distributors. 

19 (a) Duty to register.--

20 (1) On or before September 1, 2021, a returnable  
21 beverage distributor shall register with the department,  
22 using forms prescribed by the department, and shall notify  
23 the department of any change in address or other information  
24 previously submitted.

25 (2) After September 1, 2021, a person who desires to  
26 conduct business in this Commonwealth as a returnable  
27 beverage distributor shall register with the department no  
28 later than one month prior to the commencement of the  
29 business.

30 (b) Maintenance of records.--

20210HB0579PN0542

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## Substantive Language

The language that dictates the policy to be enacted. Section 3 requires a 5 cent deposit for all beverage containers sold and section 4 requires the beverage container distributors, which includes manufacturers and sellers, to register with the Department of Environmental Protection.

To find the complete version of this and other bills debated in the state of Pennsylvania, visit [this link](#) and use the search engine to find other bills and laws.

# Pennsylvania City & County Climate Change Policies

## Cumberland County Climate Action Plan

- A four prong greenhouse gas emission climate change plan targeting transportation, solid waste, and energy emissions as well as land use.

## Pittsburgh

- At COP26, Pittsburgh won second place for its Marshall Plan for Middle America, which planned to use current businesses and programs to transition the city away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy. Pittsburgh won in the “Achieving Net Zero” category.

## Allegheny County

- Air Pollution
- Climate Mitigation

## Township of Lower Marion

- The township is participating in a multi-municipality planning process to reduce GHG emissions focusing on the town’s municipal buildings and transitioning to clean energy.
- The Township achieved Sol Smart Bronze Designation to ease permitting of rooftop solar.
- Hired Paloma Vila, PE as the town’s Sustainability Manager

# Pennsylvania City & County Climate Change Policies

## Montgomery County

- Held a town hall virtually where local students could testify on why climate change is important
- Cindy Wang, Noemi Bolanos, Montgomery County (Student Advocates Protecting the Planet Program)
- Eco-Evening Virtual Town Hall Series
- Montgomery County Executive Mark Elridge



# Policy Toolkit Survey

Thank you for taking the time to download and utilize one, or all, of our TCI Policy Toolkits!

To ensure that these Policy Toolkits are meeting your needs, please leave any and all feedback that you can to help improve our toolkit offering.

Please take a few minutes to complete a quick survey. You will be entered into our monthly eco-merch giveaway while completing the survey!



[Click here to take the survey.](#)

**Thank you!**

# Stories of Change



## The Climate Initiative

**Write it. Speak it. Show it.**

# **Share your climate policy projects \*for\* the world.**

**Your story of change will inspire other youth to take  
meaningful climate action.**

In connection with TCI programs, tools, and events,  
Stories of Change are shaping the way youth and  
communities across the nation and beyond are taking  
action on climate change.

We want to hear how utilizing our Toolkits has impacted  
your climate journey. Your story can encourage other  
youth to take action.

[Click HERE for more information and to submit your  
Story of Change!](#)