

I [posted](#) last week about Governor Christie's support for solar power. He immediately followed that action by vetoing a bill to bring New Jersey back into RGGI, the greenhouse gas trading system of the Northeast states. (RGGI stands for Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.) The [veto message](#) points out that he had already vetoed a similar bill. He contends that RGGI is just a tax on electricity that fails to reduce emissions. A tax on electricity would presumably reduce emissions by reducing the need for power generation. Presumably, however, Christie is worried that carbon leakage would undo this effect. The evidence that I've seen does suggest that RGGI has reduced emissions within the participating state, but the extent of leakage is unclear.

Interestingly, the veto message reaffirms Christie's support for action against climate change: "My Administration remains committed to enacting and pursuing policies that work with market-driven forces to decrease greenhouse gas emissions." He then points to the solar legislation as an example.

Christie has been consistent in his views about RGGI and climate change. According to the [Washington Post](#), at the time he originally withdrew New Jersey from RGGI, he took a very similar position:

Christie said he did not question that human activity plays at least a partial role in warming the planet: "I've always said that climate change is real and it's impacting our state." But he said that he and his staff believe the regional program would do little to offset the problem.

"This program is not effective in reducing greenhouse gases and is unlikely to be in the future," he said. "The whole system is not working as it was intended to work. It is a failure."

Christie emphasized that his decision to withdraw from RGGI did not mean the state was dropping its efforts toward clean energy. As a sign of his commitment to energy alternatives, he said that he opposed building any new coal-fired power plants in New Jersey.

Reasonable minds can differ about the effectiveness of RGGI, but it's not a very expensive program and withdrawing is a step backward in terms of promoting regional and national climate policies. So I think Christie's position is a mistake. But his consistency in supporting climate action is certainly a welcome contrast with other politicians like former

maverick John McCain and former moderate Mitt Romney.