



Asthma and Allergy  
Foundation of America



Center for  
Climate Change & Health



August 23, 2018

Dear Senator:

The undersigned public health and medical organizations urge you to oppose S. 1857, the “Relief from New Source Performance Standards Act.” The bill delays lifesaving and long-overdue protections from air pollution from wood burning and would result in further harm to Americans’ health from toxic pollutants.

Wood smoke from residential wood heaters is a significant source of air pollution that harms human health, especially for people with asthma and other lung diseases. Emissions from wood-burning boilers, furnaces and other similar high polluting devices include particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, hazardous air pollutants and recognized carcinogens, including benzene and formaldehyde. These pollutants cause a range of adverse health effects including asthma attacks, heart attacks, lung cancer and premature deaths.

According to the most recent [National Air Toxics Assessment](#), residential wood heating accounted for 50 percent of all “area source” air toxic cancer risks nationwide in 2011. That means that the air toxics from residential wood heating accounted for as much cancer risk as all the other smaller sources that exist often in multiple sites in a community, like gas stations and dry cleaners.

In 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized new standards to limit pollution from new wood-burning boilers, furnaces, and stoves – the first updates to the standards for these types of devices in 27 years. Once fully in place in 2020, the standards will require new devices to incorporate technologies to cut harmful emissions, which will result in a nearly 70 percent reduction in fine particles and volatile organic compounds and a 62 percent reduction in carbon monoxide. The new standards reflect the improved technology currently widely in use that reduces emissions and improves fuel efficiency.

The standards apply to new devices, not existing ones, and incorporate several concessions to the wood heater manufacturing industry, including an unusually long phase-in period of five years before the 2020 new limits come into effect. Many manufacturers have devices that already meet the 2020 standards well in advance of the timeline. In the November 2017 list of devices certified under the 2015 standard, 171 devices report certified emission levels that currently meet the 2020 standards.

The legislation would unnecessarily delay for three additional years the full implementation of standards for new wood-burning boilers, furnaces, and stoves to reduce emissions. This delay would mean three additional years when families are allowed to purchase these higher polluting stoves. The problem would not end in three

years, unfortunately: due to the long lives of these devices, they would continue to spew toxic pollution into the air in their homes and neighborhoods for decades. The result would be years of premature deaths and health problems from wood smoke pollution that could have been prevented.

Please prioritize the health of your constituents. Delays in lifesaving protections from toxic wood smoke mean real harm for American families.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network  
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments  
American Lung Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Center for Climate Change and Health  
Environment and Human Health, Inc.  
Health Care Without Harm  
Trust for America's Health