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01. EPA Unveils Long-Awaited Regulations To Make New Wood Heaters Burn 80 Percent Cleaner

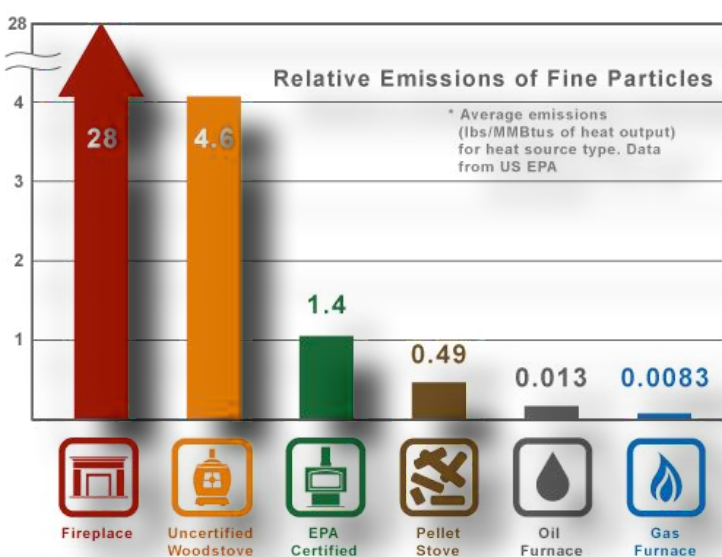


CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Friday **released** proposed long-awaited pollution standards that would require all new wood-powered stoves and heaters to burn 80 percent cleaner than those manufactured today.

The rules — which would cover new wood-stoves, fireplace inserts, hydronic heaters, forced air furnaces, and masonry heaters — would officially go into effect in 2015 and become stricter after five years, the EPA said. Forcing companies to make cleaner-burning wood heaters will have a significant effect on the environment and human health, according to the agency, which **recently estimated** that emissions from wood-burning devices account for 13 percent of all soot pollution in the nation.

“Smoke from residential wood heaters, which are used around the clock in some communities, can increase toxic air pollution, volatile organic compounds, carbon monoxide and soot ... to levels that pose serious health concerns,” the EPA said in a statement, adding that particle pollution is linked heart attacks, strokes, and asthma attacks.



Fireplaces are not included in the EPA's new proposed rules for wood heaters and stoves.

CREDIT: EPA.GOV

The agency estimates that for every dollar spent to comply with the new standards, Americans will see between \$118 and \$267 in health benefits — eventually adding up to \$1.8 to \$2.4 billion in **annual health and economic benefits**.

The EPA identifies approximately **12 million wood stoves** — 9 million of which are older, less efficient, non-EPA-certified stoves — in use in the United States today. But some lawmakers have scowled at the idea of increased regulations on them. Rep. Thomas Massey (R-KY) in particular has questioned the need, saying smog and other air pollution is most a function of “urban concentration.”

“Residents of rural areas like myself who rely on wood heat as an affordable abundant, renewable, and — you’ll like this — carbon neutral source of heat energy, are perpetually perplexed by the EPA’s fascination with regulating this form of heat since it’s primarily a rural form of heat,” Massey **said** at a November 14 hearing on accountability at the EPA. “We believe that a one-size fits all rule on wood heat that comes from Washington D.C., from bureaucrats who have never experienced the warmth of the heat that comes from wood or maybe even the exercise of collecting it themselves, really aren’t qualified to regulate our source of energy, especially when they’re taking away our other forms of energy.”

Indeed, the EPA had waited 25 years to propose updated efficiency rules for wood heaters, despite requirements under the Clean Air Act for the agency to update the standards every eight years — meaning the 1988 standard should have been updated beginning in 1996. The American Lung Association **and seven states had recently filed lawsuit** against the EPA to force it to update the 25-year-old standards, saying the agency’s failure to do so has caused the installation of thousands of new wood-burning boilers, furnaces and stoves each year that produce dangerous air pollution.

The proposed rule will now cover so-called “**pellet stoves**” that burn compressed wood or biomass, which were not covered at all under the 1988 rule. Though some manufacturers were certified under the 1988 standards, others avoided EPA certification through **an exemption** for wood stoves that have an **air to fuel ratio** of less than 35 to 1. The Alliance for Green Heat **told Biomass Magazine in July** that the fact that pellet stoves were not included in the standard meant that a whole class of stoves were avoiding EPA regulation through a loophole designed for fireplaces.

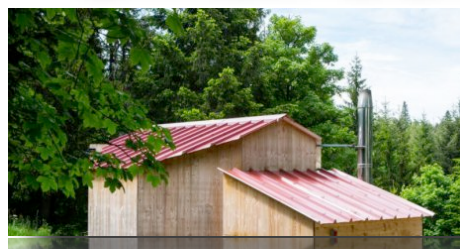
At the November EPA hearing, Massey **asked** EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to promise that new regulations would only apply to new, not existing, wood stoves (“If Americans like the wood stove they have now, can they keep it? Period?”) which is reflected in the rules proposed Friday. However, the EPA does **recommend replacing** old wood stoves, saying improved combustion efficiency can reduce CO₂, methane and black carbon emissions.

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Reporterre
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Alternatives
BARNABÉ BINCTIN (REPORTERRE)
jeudi 18 décembre 2014

02. Local, mesuré et citoyen : "Small bois is beautiful"

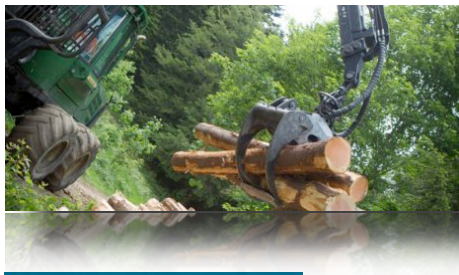


Le bois comme source d'énergie peut conduire à autre chose qu'à une industrialisation forcenée de la forêt et à d'immenses centrales de production d'électricité. Exemple concret avec le Projet Modul'R qui remplace le fioul et allie réseau de chauffage en circuit court, sylviculture raisonnée et investissement citoyen.

Le bois-énergie est acceptable, voire souhaitable, mais à condition de rester dans sa première finalité – faire de la chaleur – et à une échelle adaptée.

"Des projets de production compris entre 1 et 10 MW, fourchette maximum", dit Serge Defaye, "sont des dimensionnements qui assurent le maintien d'une sylviculture raisonnée".

Exemple : le projet "**Modul'R**" à Yssingeaux (Haute-Loire), qui vise à créer un réseau de chauffage en circuit court : des micro-chaudières d'une puissance totale de 1,2 MW s'alimentent à partir de la ressource locale pour fournir en chaleur les bâtiments collectifs du village, écoles, gymnases ou maison de retraite.



L'entretien et la valorisation de la forêt alentour – sous forme de bois déchiqueté ou de bois d'éclaircie pour les chaudières – doit permettre la création d'emplois non-délocalisables tandis que l'empreinte carbone est améliorée : 250 000 litres de fioul remplacés par un représentent 750 tonnes de CO2 évitées.

Energie citoyenne

Par ailleurs, ce projet porté par la **coopérative ERE 43**, bénéficie du financement citoyen apporté par le **fonds Energie Partagée**. La participation citoyenne dans la propriété collective de l'infrastructure permet une réappropriation locale de l'énergie : ce sont les besoins qui déterminent l'offre de production, et non l'inverse.

En Allemagne, 72 % des capacités de biomasse installées relèvent de projets collectifs avec investissement citoyen, selon une étude récente de l'**IDDRI** (Institut de développement durable et des relations internationales). L'énergie citoyenne, "pierre philosophale de la transition énergétique", selon la Revue Durable (avril 2014), est ainsi la garante d'une bonne utilisation de la ressource forestière dans la production d'énergie.

Source : Barnabé Binctin pour Reporterre

Cet article fait partie du dossier sur la biomasse réalisé par Reporterre en partenariat avec Les Amis de la Terre. Ce dossier est publié dans Le Courrier de la baleine et sera publié progressivement sur Reporterre.

Photos : © Modul'R

► Lire aussi : **Bon est le bois, mais à la juste échelle**



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