

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

PRESS RELEASES

Carper, Murkowski Introduce Bill to Help Americans Transition to More Efficient Wood Heaters, Reduce Air Pollution

Bipartisan legislation reduces toxic air pollution, protects public health, supports American jobs

December 20, 2018

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Earlier this week, U.S. Senators Tom Carper (D-Del.), top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW), and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), top Republican on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee (ENR), introduced a bill (S. 3779) that would establish a grant program at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to incentivize the removal and replacement of old, inefficient residential wood heaters with efficient, clean-burning heaters. The Wood Heaters Emissions Reduction Act (WHERA) reduces toxic air pollution, protects public health, and supports the expansion of American jobs. WHERA also requires that Indian tribal and rural communities are fairly represented in funding allocations.

“I’ve long said that there are ways to clean up our environment and grow our economy at the same time and the Wood Heaters Emissions Reduction Act is an example of how we can do just that,” said Senator Carper. **“This bipartisan legislation builds off of the successes we continue to see with the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act – one of the most cost effective federal clean air programs with an average of \$13 in health and economic benefits for every \$1 put into the program. The Wood Heaters Emissions Reduction Act ensures communities that rely on wood heaters have access to cleaner, more affordable ones, reduces toxic pollution in the air we all breathe, and creates jobs here at**

home. At a time when our country is looking for ways to grow our economy, reduce health care costs and clean up the environment, this legislation stands out as an opportunity we should capitalize on. It's a true win-win."

"Many Alaskans, along with millions of families across the country, rely on wood as an abundant, affordable fuel to heat their homes. Older, inefficient appliances for wood heat can last a really long time, but newer options are better for both our health and the environment," said Senator Murkowski. **"The bill Sen. Carper and I introduced yesterday would provide families with a cost-effective way to transition to appliances built with the most innovative wood-burning technologies to help reduce emissions, and ensure the air we breathe is cleaner both inside and outside of our homes."**

"Dangerous emissions from wood heaters place people at risk for harms to their health as well as at risk for premature death," said Harold P. Wimmer, National President and CEO of the American Lung Association. **"This bill would help communities make real reductions in air pollution by swapping out older, more polluting wood heaters for cleaner ones. We applaud the leadership of Senator Tom Carper and Senator Lisa Murkowski in proposing this solution, which would help protect health nationwide."**

Specifically, the Wood Heaters Emissions Reduction Act would:

- **Authorize \$75 million for each fiscal year 2019 through 2024 for an EPA grant program that incentives households to change-out their old wood heaters for cleaner burning stoves.** Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 11.5 million homes use wood as a primary or secondary heat source, 58 percent of those homes are found in rural areas. It is estimated that 6 million residential wood heaters in operation today do not meet 1988 EPA Clean Air Act emission standards, much less the emissions standards implemented in 2015.
- **Replace old wood heaters with new, efficient heaters and encourage the recycling of old heaters.** Creates a voluntary program to replace older wood stoves with new, efficient, cleaner burning and properly installed heaters that at least meet EPA's most stringent wood heater emission standards.
- **Require funds to be made available to Indian tribes.** EPA would make available no less than 4 percent of the funds for Indian tribes to use for maintenance and installation of the new stoves. The bill also directs EPA to use public educational outreach to develop incentives and consult Indian tribes to promote the replacement of old, inefficient wood heaters.
- **Result in cleaner air.** Older, inefficient residential wood heaters can produce a deadly mix of particulate matter, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, black carbon and air toxics such as benzene and formaldehyde. EPA has

determined that replacing just one old, inefficient wood heater is equivalent to taking five dirty diesel engines off the road and the monetized public health benefits from replacing the nation's old, inefficient residential wood heaters would be up to \$126 billion per year.

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