

DAN BENISHEK M.D.
FIRST DISTRICT, MICHIGAN



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

514 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2201
(202) 225-4735
WWW.BENISHEK.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

March 19, 2014

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We write today regarding the EPA's proposed New Source Performance Standards that would update emission requirements for new residential wood heaters. Since the EPA released the proposed rule in early January, we have heard from a number of citizens in our districts that are greatly concerned about the impact this regulation will have on their ability to heat their homes in a cost effective manner.

In a time of rising fuel costs, many of our constituents have turned to the traditional wood burning stove as a means of providing affordable heat for their families during periods of record cold. As you are aware, many of these families and senior citizens live in very rural communities where heating alternatives are extremely limited. Winters in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan are often harsh, and access to reliable heat can be a matter of life and death.

We understand that these regulations apply to only newly-introduced wood stoves. Still, manufacturers estimate that compliance will significantly increase the cost of new stoves, and the increased costs may make wood heating prohibitively expensive for many. By EPA's own analysis, this regulation will increase the price of stoves and may reduce the number of households opting to burn wood for heat. As many of the lowest income citizens choose to heat with wood in our district, we are concerned that this rule will have a disparate impact on those constituents who can least afford it.

As you are aware, the areas that most frequently use wood burning stoves are rural in nature. The proposed rule makes no distinction between stoves in these communities and those in polluted, urban areas. It is our belief that this proposal reflects a one-size-fits-all, Washington approach to governance that does not adequately address the diverse needs of different regions of our nation.

The benefits cited in the EPA Regulatory Impact Analysis are largely intangible and speculative. The cost on Northern Michigan families, however, will be immediate and clear. It is our hope that you will fully consider the needs our nation's rural population when considering the need for promulgating a final rule. Should you have any final question or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our offices directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Benishek".

Dan Benishek
Member of Congress
Michigan's First District

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Reid Ribble".

Reid Ribble
Member of Congress
Wisconsin's Eighth District