

Episode 56FW June 7, 2023. Alaska's Republican Attorney General joins 9 U S State A G's to sue the E P A if new wood stove certification standards are not issued soon.

United States

Biden-Harris Administration Launches \$7 Billion Solar for All Grant Competition

On June 28, the Biden-Harris Administration [launched](#) the [\\$7 billion Solar for All grant competition](#) to fund residential solar programs, lower energy costs for families, and advance environmental justice through President Biden's Investing in America agenda. The Solar for All grant competition was created by the Inflation Reduction Act's [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#) and advances the [Justice40 Initiative](#). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is hosting an [informational webinar](#) on July 12, with notices of intent due by July 31, August 14, or August 28 (depending on applicant type), and applications due by September 26.

Alaska

RAWSEP View: Wood stove certification should be replaced by a complaint based system, using PurpleAir PM2.5 monitor data gathered at the fenceline in the yards of near neighbors of indoor residential wood burners, in order to gather evidence leading to bans of indoor residential wood stove burning entirely. <https://dems.ag/profile/treg-taylor/> According to the Democratic Attorney Generals Association, Treg Taylor, Alaska's Attorney General, is a Republican. The Attorneys General are not necessarily asking that the EPA issue stricter wood stove certification standards, rather suing asking that the EPA issue new wood stove certification standards soon. This assumes that wood stove certification is an adequate way to deal with the pollution from wood stoves. RAWSEP believes that no wood stove burning is "safe". RAWSEP believes that regulation on a complaint basis using PM2.5 monitors in the yards of near neighbors of indoor residential wood burners will quickly provide the proof that wood burning is not a "safe" method of home heating, especially in comparison with clean renewable, cheap alternatives such as heat pumps that work at temperatures down to 40 degrees below zero Fahrenheit and could be powered by the clean renewable alternative of a smart electric grid powered by wind, solar and geothermal or hydro power in Alaska, for home heating, these alternatives now available and with subsidies in 2023.

Treg Taylor and 9 other attorneys general of 10 states announced that they intended to file suit against the federal E P A. Alaska and nine other states have notified the Environmental Protection Agency they intend to sue if new standards for certification of wood-burning stoves are not issued soon. Aside from Alaska's concerns about the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the [states' notice cited concerns that low-income and minority neighborhoods are suffering more from wood smoke that is being emitted by improperly certified heaters.](#) "Many of these devices will be installed in communities that are overburdened by environmental harms and other inequities, further exacerbating environmental justice issues," the notice said.

This article from the Alaska Beacon quotes the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Jason Brune, who said wood smoke is responsible for 80% to 90% of the (Fairbanks North Star) borough's air-quality problems. But Brune goes on to blame E P A regulators, not the state of Alaska for pollution regulation that is "overly punitive". Brune does not address the health concerns of continuing high levels of PM2.5 pollution from wood burning stoves in Fairbanks, Alaska. Brune states that the E P A federal government rules have little or no environmental benefit, although E P A rules designed by the federal government to have at least some environmental benefit, from some monitoring of the level of PM2.5 in the air from indoor residential wood burning, even if not measured directly at the stack of each indoor residential wood burning stove. "Unfortunately, EPA regulators in Seattle and Washington, D.C. are centrally focused on elements of the SIP that will have little to no environmental benefit, or at worst are [overly punitive to utility ratepayers,](#)" (Brune) said in the Department of Law statement. These statements by the Alaskan head of the DEC must be music to the ears of the wood stove industry in Alaska, who seek relief from any cost to the wood stove industry of any compliance with federal E P A regulation of wood stove emissions. The Alaska legislature this spring also passed a resolution that the Alaska DEC develop an economically defensible state implementation plan (S I P) (for wood stove standards) for Fairbanks. The code words "economically defensible" probably refer a preferred state for Brune where the wood stove industry in Alaska gets its way, Alaska continues to lag in regulation of air pollution and Alaska's North Star Fairbanks borough continues, under Alaska's direction, to allow PM2.5 emitting wood stoves to pollute Fairbanks' air. This article from the Alaska Beacon states "But data from the EPA – which has praised Fairbanks' improvements in wood-burning practices – indicates that those stoves are [less of a problem than they were in the past](#)

and that validity of certification is now a relatively minor issue in the borough. Significant air-quality improvements have been achieved since 2010, according to data from the Environmental Protection Agency.

RAWSEP believes that improvement over air pollution to a level that still exceeds the mildest E P A limits on PM2.5 is not adequate improvement. Alaska's DEC is non-compliant with E P A's 2015 limits on PM2.5, and Brune indicates he does not welcome any stricter regulation of PM2.5 emissions from the E P A for wood stoves in Fairbanks, Alaska or anywhere else in Alaska.

The Alaska Legislature this spring passed a resolution urging a solution for the state-EPA dispute. The measure, House Joint Resolution 11, called on the EPA to update its wood-stove standards so they are more useful and credible and called on the Department of Environmental Conservation to "develop an economically and legally defensible state implementation plan for the Fairbanks North Star Borough nonattainment area."

Why is there no photo of a wood stove emitting pollution in this article in the Alaska Beacon about a suit against the E P A over wood burning stove standards? Why is there a photo of traffic in this article in the Alaska Beacon about a suit against the E P A over wood burning stove standards? Why does this article in the Alaska Beacon about a suit against the E P A over wood burning stove standards begin with a photo of emissions from a Coal burning plant? Is this photo used to imply that coal emissions are worse than wood burning emissions? That is incorrect. Wood burning emissions are worse than coal burning emissions. Yes, coal burning emissions do not present a pretty picture, but wood burning emits more CO2 and PM2.5 than coal burning. PM2.5 is particulate matter of 2.5 micrometer size, the perfect size to infiltrate the human lung, setting off a cascade of human health problems and early deaths. Wood burning is 90% PM2.5. The lawsuit described in this Alaska Beacon article says that 10 U S States intend to sue the E P A "if new (PM2.5) standards for (wood burning stoves) are not issued soon".

Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates are concerned that new PM2.5 standards, whenever they are issued, be strict and effective in controlling air pollution and therefore RAWSEP would like emission limits for PM2.5 to be lowered to 25 micrograms per meter cubed daily and 8 micrograms per meter cubed annually. It is not necessarily how fast the limits are lowered but whether PM2.5 "safe" limits are lowered significantly that is important to RAWSEP. The Alaskan Legislature passed a resolution this Spring that resolved that the E P A should be more flexible and lenient with PM2.5 standards, because of the economic cost of complying with even the 2015 E P A PM2.5 limits in Alaska. In that statement the Alaskan Legislature also blamed the E P A for the flaws in the wood stove certification program which the Office of the Inspector General (O I G), the watchdog of the E P A, had pointed out in a report in February 2023. The O I G made clear in the report that the flaw in wood stove certification that resulted in highly polluting wood stoves continuing to be manufactured and sold in the U S, was the result of lobbying by the wood stove industry for loopholes to compliance with even existing PM2.5 limits. The fault of non-compliance was directed by the wood stove industry, but not a word was directed to the wood stove industry by the Alaskan legislature, except to state that compliance with PM2.5 limits had negative economic consequences to the wood stove industry.

In other news articles, some descriptions of the 10 state suit against the E P A state that the ten states are "blue". The facts below show the opposite in most cases, that Alaska is a "red" state. Although Mary Peltola is a newly-elected Democrat from Alaska for the U S House of Representatives and the Alaskan state senate has a Democratic majority caucus, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the two U S Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan are Republicans. The Alaskan State House of Representatives has a Republican Majority Caucus. The Alaskan Supreme court is viewed as Republican controlled. The current Attorney General of Alaska takes traditionally Republican positions on most issues.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska_Legislature

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates. Wikipedia states that Alaska has representation in the Alaskan Legislature of 20 senators and 40 representatives.

In the Alaskan State Senate the Majority caucus is 17 out of 20 State Senators. 9 of the 20 Senators are Democrat, 8 are Republicans who caucus with Democrats and 3 are Republicans that do not caucus with Democrats. In the Alaskan State House of Representatives the Majority caucus is 23 out of 40 Alaskan State Representatives with 19 Republicans, 2 Independents and 2 Democrats caucusing with the House Majority. The Minority caucus of 16 out of 40 is made up of 11 Democrats, 1 Republican caucusing with the minority caucus, and 4 independents caucusing with the Minority Caucus. There is one non-caucusing Alaskan House Representative, who is Republican.

These numbers from the Alaskan Legislature show that the Majority Caucus in the Alaskan State Senate is Democrat, and the Majority Caucus in the Alaskan House of Representatives is Republican. That is not a particularly "Blue" Alaskan State Legislature.

<https://gov.alaska.gov/> James Dunleavy is an American educator and politician serving since 2018 as the 12th governor of Alaska. A Republican, he was a member of the Alaska Senate from 2013 to 2018.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska>

In Alaska, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, both U S Senators, Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, are Republicans. Mary Peltola, the U S House Representative from Alaska, is a Democrat. Mary Peltola was elected only recently.

Government	
• Governor	Mike Dunleavy (R)
• Lieutenant Governor	Nancy Dahlstrom (R)
Legislature	Alaska Legislature
• Upper house	Senate
• Lower house	House of Representatives
Judiciary	Alaska Supreme Court
U.S. senators	Lisa Murkowski (R) Dan Sullivan (R)
U.S. House delegation	Mary Peltola (D) (list)

https://ballotpedia.org/Alaska_Supreme_Court

Alaska had a (State Supreme) Court Balance Score of 2.00, (on the 5 member Alaskan Supreme Court) indicating Republican control of the court. In total, the study found that there were 15 states with Democrat-controlled courts, 27 states with Republican-controlled courts, and eight states with Split courts. The map below shows the court balance score of each U S state.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Peltola

Mary Sattler Peltola (née Sattler; [Yup'ik](#): Akalleq; formerly Nelson, formerly Kapsner; born August 31, 1973) is an American politician and former tribal judge serving as the [U.S. representative](#) from [Alaska's at-large congressional district](#) since September 2022. She previously served as a judge on the [Orutsararmiut Native Council's tribal court](#), executive director of the [Kuskokwim River](#) Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, [Bethel](#) city councillor and member of the [Alaska House of Representatives](#).

A member of the [Democratic Party](#), Peltola defeated former [Governor Sarah Palin](#) and [Alaska Policy Forum](#) board member Nick Begich in an [upset](#) in the [August 2022 special election](#) to succeed [Don Young](#), who died in March that year. In doing so, she became the first [Alaska Native](#) member of [Congress](#) and the only [Russian Orthodox](#), as well as the first woman ever to represent Alaska in the House, the first person to have been born in Alaska to serve in the House, and first Democrat since [Nick Begich Sr.](#) in 1972. She was reelected to a full term in the [regularly scheduled election in November 2022.](#) **As of 2023, Peltola is the only Democrat holding statewide office in Alaska.**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treg_Taylor

The current Attorney General of Alaska takes traditionally Republican positions on most issues. Tregarrick R. Taylor is an American attorney and politician serving as the [Alaska attorney general](#). He assumed office in an acting capacity on January 30, 2021, succeeding [Ed Sniffen](#), who resigned after being appointed to the position two weeks before. Taylor supported the [Pebble Mine](#) proposal and expressed opposition to the federal government's decision to block the project. Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor led the effort supported by 16 states to call out how the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is trying, through a draft rule, to replace land uses with conservation on some federal lands. He has threatened legal action against [Walgreens](#) over the potential distribution of [abortion pills in Alaska](#), even though abortion and the relevant medications remain legal in Alaska. Attorney General Treg Taylor started with the Alaska Department of Law in 2018. Prior to being appointed Deputy Attorney General, Treg was senior counsel for a subsidiary of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, the largest locally owned and operated business in Alaska. He also served as counsel for McKinley Capital Management, an investment manager serving a global client base from its headquarters in Anchorage, Alaska. Treg began his legal career in Anchorage working in a commercial litigation firm for four years.

Alaska

[Alaska and 9 other states threaten to sue EPA over wood-burning stove standards](#)

Alaska Beacon.

July 6, 2023.

Smokestack emissions are seen along the Fairbanks skyline on March 1. At left is the coal-fired heat and power plant on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. Alaska and nine other states have filed a notice of intent to sue the

Environmental Protection Agency over its certification process for wood-fired stoves, which are factors in Fairbanks air pollution. Alaska and nine other states have notified the Environmental Protection Agency they intend to sue if new standards for certification of wood-burning stoves are not issued soon.

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates.

The EPA last issued standards for wood-burning stoves in 2015, and new standards are due at least every eight years, said the [notice of intent to sue](#), which was issued on June 29.

Since 2010, there have been [thousands of stoves](#) replaced, repaired or converted to non-wood units, according to EPA data. The 1,596 new wood-burning stoves installed between 2010 and 2022 [showed significant improvements](#), according to the data. By 2022, the average emissions per wood-burning stove was less than a fourth of the 2010 average, according to the data.

Since 2016 – when standards set in 2015 were effective — 158 [EPA-certified wood-burning stoves](#) have been installed in the borough, according to the EPA's data. Since that year, much of the changeover involved conversions to other types of heating.

Aside from Alaska's concerns about the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the [states' notice cited concerns that low-income and minority neighborhoods are suffering more from wood smoke that is being emitted by improperly certified heaters](#). "Many of these devices will be installed in communities that are overburdened by environmental harms and other inequities, further exacerbating environmental justice issues," the notice said.

[The states' notice cited documented deficiencies in the EPA's wood-stove certification program](#).

Those citations include an EPA [Inspector General's report](#) issued in February that found the 2015 standards were flawed and that inaccurate tests and oversight likely meant that consumers were getting substandard products marketed as "certified."

The notice also cited a 2021 [study](#) by a coalition of eight Northeast states that evaluated over 250 EPA-certified wood heaters and found "a systemic failure of the entire certification process" and a lack of oversight creating a "dysfunctional" system. In many cases, manufacturers and testing laboratories distorted measurements, resulting in consumers getting subpar products, the report said.

[Alaska and 9 other states threaten to sue EPA over wood-burning stove standards](#)

Alaska Public Media

Particulate pollution from wood-burning stoves and other sources can get trapped in that stagnant air, resulting in violations of Clean Air Act ...

Arizona

[Arizona Department of Environmental Quality issued Ozone High Pollution Advisory for ...](#)

Arizona Emergency Information Network - az.gov

Eliminate wood burning in fireplaces, stoves, chimeneas, and outdoor fire pits. Avoid using leaf blowers. Use a rake or broom to keep debris out of ... Particulate pollution from wood-burning stoves and other sources can get trapped in that stagnant air, resulting in violations of Clean Air Act ...

California, Los Angeles

[Future demand for wood will undermine efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions](#)

Los Angeles Times

Many local air districts have also offered incentives to replace wood-burning appliances, not only for the climate benefits, but also to reduce ... When they are cut down, the stored carbon can be released over time, or rapidly if the wood is burned. By midcentury, humans are expected to raze ...

New Jersey

[Phil Murphy administration now going after wood burning stoves - Shore News Network](#)

Shore News Network

When you think of New Jersey, you don't necessarily think of homes with wood burning stoves in them, but a large number of them are in use across ...

Phil Murphy administration now going after wood burning stoves

July 5, 2023

When you think of New Jersey, you don't necessarily think of homes with wood burning stoves in them, but a large number of them are in use across the state. Many rural residents in New Jersey not only use their wood-burning stoves for nostalgia, they also use them as an alternative source to warm their homes in winter.

Now, the state is threatening to sue the EPA for not enforcing the “New Source Performance Standards” for wood-burning stoves.

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates.

Phil Murphy’s administration is joining other states including Maryland, New York and Massachusetts in a threat to sue the Environmental Protection Agency for failing to timely review and revise the New Source Performance Standards (performance standards) for Residential Wood Heaters (wood heaters) under the Clean Air Act (the Act).

This new standard could lead to strict enforcement on wood burning stoves in the Garden State.

On March 16, 2015, EPA issued a final rule with two sets of updated performance standards for wood heaters.⁴ That rule had an effective date of May 15, 2015, on which the first set of updated standards went into effect.⁵ The second, more stringent set of the 2015 standards, with lower levels of particulate matter emissions, went into effect on May 15, 2020.

The state claims the EPA is not enforcing those standards and new heaters do not meet the regulations set forth in the 2015 ruling.

The EPA’s Office of Inspector General corroborated the study’s findings, determining that “EPA’s residential wood heater program does not provide reasonable assurance that wood heaters are properly tested and certified before reaching consumers.”

New Jersey says the issue is an environmental justice issue that is counter to environmental equity being touted by the Governor’s office.

If the EPA does not correct itself, New Jersey and other states plan to sue the federal government.

New York, Chelsea

[New Pizza Reg's Real Aim: Scrub Particles That Cause Asthma, Not Fight Climate Change](#)

Chelsea News NY

proposal concerning coal and wood fired pizza ovens stirred up controversy. However, a careful reading of the regulation by Straus News clarifies that ...

North Carolina

[Wildfire smoke can harm human health, even when the fire is burning hundreds of miles away](#)

ncwlife.com

Smoke from more than 100 wildfires burning across Canada has been ... Being exposed to wood smoke won't independently cause someone to have a ...

New York, New York City

Oregon

[Oregon among states planning to sue EPA for allowing sales of polluting wood-burning stoves](#)

Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon's attorney general joins nine other attorneys general to demand greater regulation of pollution from residential wood burning stoves.

[Oregon among states planning to sue EPA for allowing sales of polluting wood-burning stoves](#)

Oregon Capital Chronicle

Wood smoke contains a number of harmful air pollutants, including carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter that can lead to asthma, ...

Oregon, Philomath

[Oregon among states planning to sue EPA for allowing sales of polluting wood-burning stoves](#)

Philomath News

Oregon's attorney general joins nine other attorneys general to demand greater regulation of pollution from residential wood-burning stoves.

Utah, Salt Lake

[Utah County saw state's worst air pollution after Independence Day fireworks](#)

The Salt Lake Tribune

Particle pollution levels, also known as PM 2.5 levels, measure the level of dust and soot in the air. At 10 a.m. Wednesday, levels in Utah County ...

Vermont

[Vt., NY among 10 states that plan to sue EPA over standards for residential wood-burning stoves](#)

KWCH

... wood-burning stoves has allowed the continued sale of appliances that could worsen pollution.

[Out There: How to handle the smoke | Vermont Public](#)

Vermont Public

In late June, Burlington set a record for worst air quality recorded in Vermont when PM 2.5 concentrations soared to 174 micrograms per cubic ...

[Vt. museum remembers famous abolitionist's speech on meaning of 4th of July - WCAX](#)

WCAX

Vt., NY among 10 states that plan to sue EPA over standards for residential wood-burning stoves. Updated: 46 minutes ago. Attorneys general from 10 ...

Vermont, Rutland

[Wood as fuel | Letters | rutlandherald.com](#)

Rutland Herald

Elana Mihaly's commentary on not utilizing biomass fuel ("Mihaly: Wood-burning future," June 30) claims:

Washington, Seattle

[Research led by UW undergrad shows ultrafine air pollution reflects Seattle's redlining history](#)

Newswise

... (PM 2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). The study used mobile monitoring — a car loaded with air pollution sensors driving around the city for the ...

[Rant and Rave: Neighborhood campfires not appreciated by reader | The Seattle Times](#)

The Seattle Times

Wood smoke is unhealthy too. It doesn't disappear but drifts onto neighboring properties — some blocks away — and fills yards and houses with ...

Washington DC

[Wildfire smoke may be having a negative impact on your mental health - The Washington Post](#)

The Washington Post

"Because it involves inefficient combustion of wood, leaves and soil, wildfire smoke contains just an enormous number of chemicals.

Western United States

[Drought impacts on the electricity system, emissions, and air quality in the western United States](#)

PNAS

Drought-Induced Emissions Increase Surface PM_{2.5} Near Fossil Fuel Plants. When accounting for the plant-level heterogeneity, we find that drought- ...

Dubai

[US states sue Washington, seek strict wood-burning stove standards](#)

Big News Network.com

... to sue the US Environmental Protection Agency claiming it failed to review and ensure emissions standards for residential wood-burning stoves.

India

[PM 2.5 levels in rural- urban regions not very different, witnessed similar trend of decline ...](#)

Times of India

To bring focus on the possible impacts of air pollution on the country's rural population, it used Dr Sagnik Dey's PM 2.5 SAANS data (satellite data) ...

India, Bathinda

[PM 2.5 levels in rural- urban regions not very different, witnessed similar trend of decline ...](#)

Times of India

Environment News: BATHINDA: Even as the country's air pollution mitigation action is hugely concentrated in cities and often ignores the rural ...

India, Kolkata

[Pollution check: 'PM 2.5 in Bengal dips in both rural & urban areas' - Millennium Post](#)

Millennium Post

Kolkata: Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 in Bengal has decreased sharply in both rural and urban areas between 2017 to 2022, a latest study revealed.

India, Maharashtra

['Maha PM 2.5 reduction in 5 yrs lowest among states' | Mumbai News - Times of India](#)

Times of India

... particulate matter (PM) 2.5 levels shows. According to the analysis, PM 2.5 concentration levels in rural Maharashtra decreased only by 9.5% from ... According to the analysis, PM 2.5 concentration levels in rural Maharashtra decreased only by 9.5% from 2017 to 2022. In the state's urban areas, ...

India, Mumbai

[Lack of significant reduction in carcinogenic PM 2.5 levels in Maharashtra's air raises concerns](#)

Times of India

An analysis of 2022 data on carcinogenic 2.5PM levels in the air reveals that Maharashtra, both in its rural and urban areas including Mumbai, ...

Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates, see <https://RAWSEPresidents.wordpress.com> and click on the nearest right icon for the latest month, July 2023, of PDFs of articles with U R L's to search on. To the right of that, Stickers to handout for RAWSEP <https://rawsepresidents.wordpress.com/rawsep-sticker-templates-get-your-two-cents-in/> Games such as 1)Bingo for RAWSEP, 2)Crosswords for RAWSEP, 3)EndWoodSmokeJeopardy. 4)EndWoodSmokeMonopoly Games, 5) a RAWSEP Flyer, 6)the Un-Twist-it Game, and 7)"Vending Machines for PM2.5 monitors", and icon links to 30 minute Youtube videos and Spotify podcasts as well as podcasts on Amazon Music Prime (free for Prime subscribers), podcasts.google.com, Cast Box, and Pocket Cast (Pocket Cast is only free on the phone App. Pocket Cast works on Apple phones) and, below those icons, icon links to monthly PDFs of articles with URL's to search on, from June 2023 to May 2022.

Alaska had a Court Balance Score of **2.00**, indicating **Republican control** of the court. In total, the study found that there were 15 states with Democrat-controlled courts, 27 states with Republican-controlled courts, and eight states with Split courts. The map below shows the court balance score of each state.

