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Wood burning causes more pollution than diesel trucks



In 2015 I wrote here a comment "Wood and pellets: a "burning" fine particulate problem", where the small particle emissions were compared to those of traditional fossil energy sources, and found extremely high. As we are now in a time where Diesel-bashing has become the newest green fad, I was agreeably surprised by an article from Michael Le Page in the

Comment

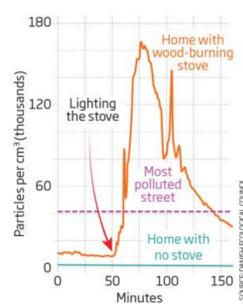
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Scientist (4 Feb 2017), titled "Where there's smoke" (access is paywalled!). He writes how log burning in London and other cities has become a major pollution problem, emitting often much more PM 2.5 than Diesel trucks.

A Danish "eco-friendly" wood burner was found to emit through the chimney 500000 small particles per cm³, to be compared to the 1000 particles/cm³ found at the tail-pipe of a modern Diesel truck: so **one** eco-family thinking to save the planet caused as much pollution as 500 Diesel trucks!

Look at this graph from the Danish Ecological Council showing the particulate count inside a Copenhagen wood burning house:



This "correctly installed stove" caused an inside pollution 4 times higher than that of the most polluted street!

As I wrote in my former article, log burning certainly is the big contributor, well exceeding a pellet stove. But regarding the romantics, it is difficult to negate the much higher emotional appeal of a burning log compared to some smoldering pellets.

What I really find so scandalous is that people have been coaxed by infused "climate guild" to switch to wood burning, and now the nasty side of this eco-fad shows up. But as much as Diesel bashing seems to be hip, ignoring the pollution caused by wood burning is a real scandal. A scandal which seems a perfect "déjà-vu", a repeat of the politically motivated push to the less CO₂ emitting Diesel engines in the 90's.

Do eco-politics always must swing from naively pushing a "climate" solution to recognizing (after a longer latency) that the nuisances of the solution might well be higher than the putative dangers they are meant to avoid?

PS1: here a plot from the Australian Air Quality Group showing the contributions to PM_{2.5} pollution from different sources (Jun/Jul/August is Australian winter):

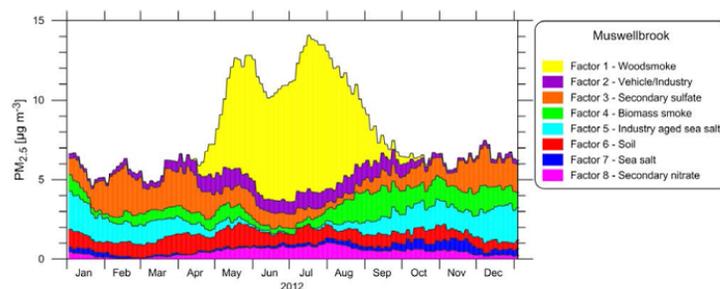


Figure 49. Time series (smoothed with 31-day running window) of the contribution of each factor to the total PM_{2.5} in Muswellbrook

The peak during July shows that woodsmoke contributes about 10 ug/m³, whereas transport and industry together only about 1 ug/m³, i.e. ten times less! (see [here](#))

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