

JAMES M. BECK, MD, ATSF
President

June 12, 2019

JUAN C. CELEDÓN, MD, DrPH, ATSF
President-Elect

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20501

POLLY E. PARSONS, MD, ATSF
Immediate Past President

Senator Merkley:

LYNN M. SCHNAPP, MD, ATSF
Vice President

On behalf of the 16,000 members of the American Thoracic Society (ATS) I want to express my appreciation for the series of bills you have introduced to address the health effects of exposure to smoke from forest fires and wildfires. It is important that Congress and the Administration begin a discussion of how we as a nation can start planning to address the ongoing risks that exposure to smoke from forest fires and wildfires pose to our nation's public health.

GREGORY P. DOWNEY, MD, ATSF
Secretary-Treasurer

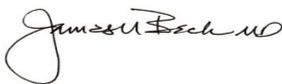
KAREN J. COLLISHAW, MPP, CAE
Executive Director

The ATS is a medical professional society of over 16,000 physicians, scientists, nurses, respiratory therapists and allied health professionals dedicated to the prevention, detection, treatment, cure and research of pulmonary disease, critical care illness and sleep disordered breathing. The ATS pursues this mission through research, academic scholarship, education and advocacy. Our members and the patients we serve, are directly impacted by the adverse health effects from exposure to forest fire and wildfire smoke. As such, we have a keen interest in fostering a public discussion on how our nation addresses the current and likely growing exposures to smoke from forest fires and wildfires.

The ATS wants to specifically commend you and endorse the Smoke Planning and Research Act that authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to expand its activities regarding research on adverse health effects of smoke, planning for communities likely to be directly impacted by smoke emergencies and communication to the public about the risks of smoke exposure and effective intervention to reduce smoke exposures. The ATS believes fostering these activities at EPA will help better prepare the U.S. for future smoke emergencies.

We look forward to working with you and your Senate colleagues to implement many of the recommendations in the legislation you have proposed.

Sincerely,



James M. Beck, MD, ATSF
President
American Thoracic Society



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