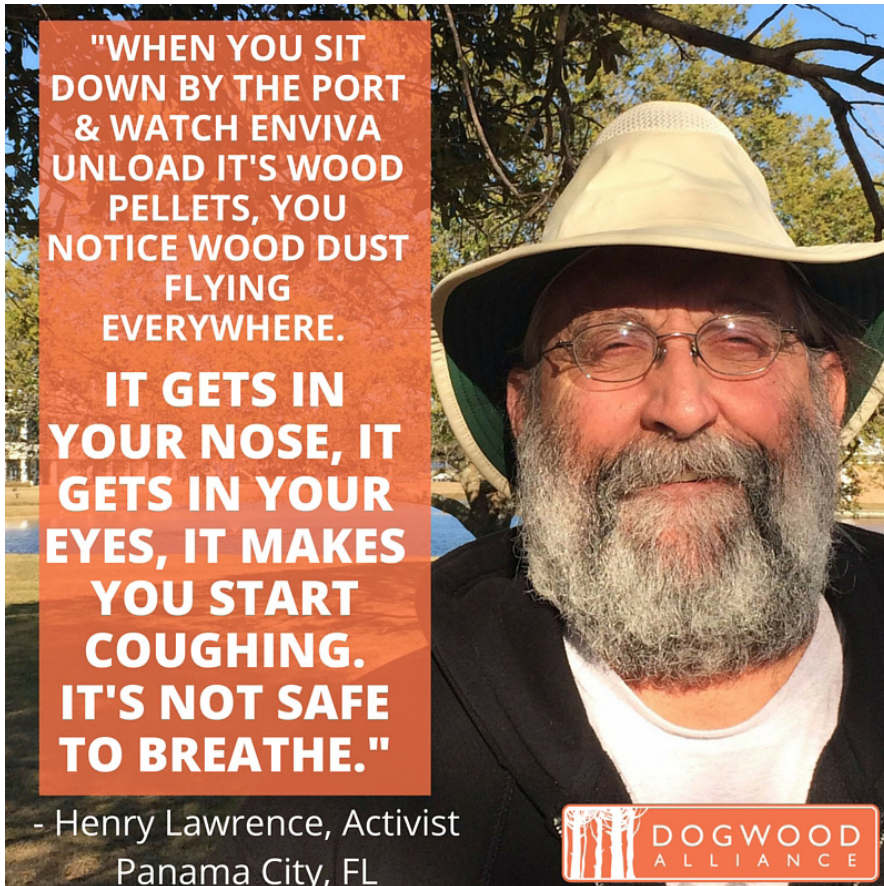


# HEALTH FACT SHEET

## How the Wood Pellet Industry Impacts Human Health and Community Well-Being



Over the last few years, the Southern US has seen a dramatic increase in wood pellet production. From Virginia to Arkansas and everywhere in between, facilities have sprung up that are dramatically impacting forests. One of the least discussed impacts of this industry are those on the health of the people living near these facilities and on the well-being of their communities.

### The Impact of Wood Pellet Production on Local Communities

- Wood Pellet facilities can potentially reduce property values and appreciation rates<sup>1</sup>

- Increased traffic to supply the mill and transport the pellets to export terminals clog up and damage local roads with logging trucks and semis<sup>2</sup>
- Production of pellets generates explosive and flammable dust, creating a fire hazard for the surrounding community<sup>3</sup>

### The Impacts on Human Health

- Wood Pellet facilities produce



noise pollution, often 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, causing sleep disruption and decreasing the quality of life for longtime residents<sup>4</sup>

- Manufacturing wood pellets releases pollutants and particulates that irritate the cardiovascular system, increasing emergency room visits for vulnerable citizens<sup>5</sup>
- The American Heart Association stated that “Short-term exposure to small particulate matter can trigger cardiovascular-disease mortality and illness; long term exposure reduces life expectancy up to a few years.”<sup>6</sup>



## PEOPLE LIVING BY PELLET PRODUCTION PLANTS SAY:

- “A lot of dust...A lot of noise at night.” - *Carl Scot, Garysburg*
- Beating and humming all through the night...didn’t know you could rob people from their sleep.” - *Wanda King, Garysburg*
- “I can’t even stand to be out on the back deck. I have to go back inside when I’m out in the yard for an extended time for a breathing treatment because my allergies are so flared up.” - *Kayla Walker, Baton Rouge*

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<sup>1</sup>Kiel & McClain (1995) Journal of Urban Economics 37:311-323.

<sup>2</sup><http://bit.ly/2aNSjcj>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Biomass-Air-Pollution-Briefing.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoJH59Asfkl>; Dahlgren et al. (2012) Environ Res 92:92-98; <http://www.wuft.org/news/2013/10/09/locals-frustrated-by-gainesville-biomass-plant-noise/>.

<sup>5</sup> Dahlgren et al. (2012) Environ Res 92:92-98; Patel (2009) Current Opinion in Pediatrics 21:235-242

<sup>6</sup>Brook et al. (2012) Circulation 121:2331-2338