

Connecticut General Assembly
Energy and Technology Committee Feb. 28, 2008
Testimony of Margaret J. Hall
in Support of HB 5596 An Act Concerning the Right to Dry

Good morning. My name is Peg Hall from Branford, Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I can be reached at 203-315-0622.

Aesthetics vs. the Environment

What's in an image? How much of our adult evaluations of what looks "nice" or what "is too much trouble" is based on childhood remembrances or un-thought-out assumptions? Let me give an example.

I was raised in a small town in a house with a big back yard. Whenever the weather was nice enough – and that includes nice, though freezing, days in the winter – Mom would hang laundry out on the clothesline instead of using the clothes dryer. My image of using clotheslines is of sunny, spring weather and sweet-smelling, crisp sheets.

One of my friends lived in New York City until he was five when his parents decided this was not where they wanted to raise a child. He was brought up to believe that a clothesline is what one uses until one can afford a dryer. His images of using clotheslines are of other people's underwear on display off a tenement balcony.

Is it any wonder that I use a clothesline as often as possible, appreciating its energy-saving value and the luxury of not worrying about catching shirts at the right instant before they wrinkle, while my friend considers a clothesline a bother and something to be hidden? "April Fresh" was once an understandable slogan for a fabric softener, but now they say "Clothesline Fresh" because the other has become too obscure. I still know how to get clothes the real "April fresh".

Besides the huge energy savings of not using a dryer, consider the savings in wear and tear on clothes. After all, the lint in the dryer isn't just dust your clothes picked up, it's little bits of the fabric. We sometimes let our images, our habits, and our worries about what the neighbors might think, get the better of our common sense and basic underlying desire for a clean environment.

When I rented at a condominium, I was forced to take down my laundry from my 2nd floor deck. I moved. We are in an energy crisis. No one should be forced to sacrifice environmental values for someone else's aesthetics. Please support HB 5596.