RAISED BILL No.H.B. 6616 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THAT WOOD SMOKE SHALL BE CONSIDERED A PUBLIC NUISANCE UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH CODE

Chair Senator Jonathan Harris, Representative Betsy Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is *Dorothy E. Alderman*. I have lived in Hebron for 2 ½ years. I live in a condo because there is no wood burning here. We heat with propane and have propane fireplaces. I moved after living on Andover Lake almost 20 years.

I had to leave my lakefront home because of wood burning stoves. Over the years 3 to 4 homes occasionally would use their wood stoves but around Thanksgiving of 2005 it seemed as if everyone started burning. One day I could count 26 houses burning wood. I knew this from the thick and smelly smoke coming out of their chimneys. (Pictures enclosed.) My husband and I are long time walkers, walking year round, 3 miles per day. It became difficult to walk because of the smell, burning in my chest and coughing. It wasn't long before I could smell the burning inside my house, even though we didn't burn wood. I had to wear a mask over my nose and mouth during the day, and at night in order to sleep. My daughter couldn't visit all winter. I bought 6 freestanding air purifiers spending over $1,000 plus I added an extra filter to my furnace. Nothing seemed to help.

I am a mentor in the school system through the Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough Youth Services. There were two burners across from Andover Elementary. I could smell the smoke inside the school. I asked the school nurse if there was an increase in the number of students with asthma. She said there were but when I mentioned the burning, she was surprised and felt it was a coincidence.

In January of 2006 we contracted to buy a condo in Hebron. I could see there was nothing we could do to make ourselves comfortable in Andover.

I went to an allergist who sent me to an ear, nose and throat doctor who sent me to the UConn Health Center. UConn has a nationally known smell and taste clinic. After extensive testing, I was diagnosed with Parasmia, a distortion of the sense of smell and taste, caused by damage to nervous tissues in the olfactory system. Parasmia is characterized by smells that don't leave the nose even after the agent smell is gone. For me it was the smell of burning wood that I carried everywhere, even miles from my neighborhood. I never knew how long the sensation would last. I still suffer from that distortion year round.

My husband, who has never had any allergies, blows his nose constantly.

Going back to the fall of 2005, we contacted the DEP and asked for help. We talked to, and were visited by, Joe Hukill DEP Field Inspector II Air Management Bureau. Joe said he had to see smoke crossing property lines in order to write a violation. He said that even if he wrote a violation there is little he could do to enforce the violation. He said that

Connecticut's air quality is among the worst in the nation. His best advice was to leave Connecticut.

I called the US EPA in Boston and spoke to Alison Simcox. who suggested I write to Robert Varney, which I did. We received a letter from Anne E. Arnold, Manager Air Quality Planning Unit US EPA New England. She wrote, "You are right to be concerned about exposure to this smoke." "Even limited exposure to smoke can be harmful to human health…" "EPA and other government agencies have identified wood burning as a major contributor to air pollution in many urban and rural areas." "We advise you to contact your local fire department and Board of health… If no applicable ordinances exist, you may want to explore procedures for proposing a new ordinance."

I contacted State Representative Pam Sawyer. She referred me to Davis J. Williams of her office. David sent me information on Act PA 05-227-sHB 6773 on outdoor wood burning furnaces. He told me there were no laws about wood burning stoves. Pam, herself, didn't want to get involved in this issue. I was surprised when she sent me a newspaper article about wood burning stoves that stated that 38% of the pollution in Connecticut skies was from burning wood.

I managed to gather together from the DEP Pat Bowe (division director) and Tom Tyler (transitional manager), State Representative Edith Prague, Andover 1st selectman Charlene Freeman, my husband and myself. The meeting was at the Andover town office. Mr. Bowe and Mr. Tyler just weren't interested and pretty much denied there was any problem going on with wood burning stoves. Edith Prague left early. It was a very embarrassing situation. As Mr. Bowe and Mr. Tyler walked out the door, they handed me several fact sheets stating the hazards of wood burning stoves. I can't even guess why they wouldn't discuss the issue with me in an intelligent manner.

I am very pleased that this health issue is coming into the public awareness. Wood burning stoves, that caused my distorted sense of smell, have negatively affected my life. Not only do I have to avoid homes, neighborhoods, and vacation spots that may have wood stoves or fire places, but also I feel ill from smells that don't seems to effect other people.

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Joseph, This will be my last message from Andover. I've become so paranoid about wood stove smoke that, I'm saying Andover, as who will know what we will find in our next home. I can't seem to get away from the pollution and have a clean breath of air no matter where I go. When driving down route 66 in Hebron, about a week ago, I belive I saw 2 outdoor wood burning furnaces. The smoke was amazing and the burning seemed to be lower than a chimney. This week we were on a trip to Westport and it smelled there too. I asked about the odor in a furniture store and the salesman said it might be burning garbage. Great!

Anyway our house is for sale and it's quite scarey. We had a meeting with Pat Bowe and Tom Tyler from DEP (We expected you to be there.), Edith Prague, and our First Selectman. It was humiliating at best.

Yesterday was the first day all winter that we would take a comfortable walk....except for John across the street. He now burns constantly even Friday when it was 68 degrees. He chops wood and must burn immediately as the smell is horrible. I tried to talk to him but got asked to leave. I couldn't tell if I was asked to leave his land or the town. Sometimes I think he is burning just to upset us.

After looking around at other lakes, we decided to move to Loveland Hills in Hebron. It is a planned community. We are very upset about leaving the lake but it seems to be our only choice. There will be only gas buring fireplace there. There is the possibility of wood stoves on Loveland Dr. But Pat Bowe told us to find a house on a hill and have no neighbors to our NW. Thanks Pat.

When 38% of the polution is particulates from wood and the DEP and the EPA knows but does nothing about it, Connecticut is in trouble and it's a shame. It can only get worse. I think you will be hearing from more sufferers as time goes by. I just hope it won't be us when we finally move to Hebron.

Neal and Dory Alderman

Feb. '06

E-mail sent to Joseph Hukill
DEP. Field Inspector II
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