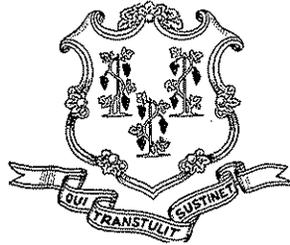


SENATOR GARY D. LeBEAU

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SENATE

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Commerce Committee

*Member*

Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee

Legislative Management Committee

Transportation Committee

March 5, 2009

I want to thank Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, and the members of the Public Health Committee for holding a hearing on HB 6616 AN ACT ESTABLISHING WOOD SMOKE TO BE A PUBLIC NUISANCE.

This is an important bill. Wood smoke is a dangerous pollutant. It contains particulate matter that can lodge deeply in the lungs and can cause a variety of health problems. Moreover the smoke contains over 100 chemical compounds, some of which are carcinogenic. Many people are allergic to these chemicals or the particulate matter.

I frankly must confess that I am not sure what the best method is to control this hazard. For indoor burning, I think that proper chimney height and adequate fluting is essential. Outdoor burning is another matter. I do know this, it is essential to insure that whatever the committee's actions are, that all outdoor burning is recognized as a potential hazard.

I have a constituent whose neighbor constantly burns wood in a barbecue type stove. The person who is doing the burning is doing so to smoke meats. This person sometimes smokes meat for hours or even days on end. Because these people live on the side of a small hill, the air gets trapped and does not diffuse, especially when this smoking process goes on for hours or days. The neighbor's house and garage fill up with smoke. Even when he closes his windows and doors in the summer, he can not sit in his family room without the house smelling like he is camping and he has difficulty breathing. Sometimes he can not sit in his house without he and his family's skin burning and their eyes becoming irritated because of the smoke.

This family has called the police, but they claim little power to do anything. They did say that they could cite the person burning the wood as a public nuisance but that it would be better if they could specifically cite a state law which would make wood smoke a nuisance. . This family is not alone. Many others are afflicted with the same results, but not necessarily from the same source.

I thank the committee for attempting to deal with this hazard. I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Gary D. LeBeau in black ink.  
Gary D. LeBeau