

My NAME IS LILY SINNAMON - I LIVE IN STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT. 860.684.2850

I AM SPEAKING TODAY IN SUPPORT OF HB: 6166 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THAT WOOD SMOKE SHALL BE CONSIDERED A PUBLIC NUISANCE UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH CODE.

I have been made extremely ill by my neighbor's smoke, and currently have no recourse.

Two years ago, I was able, as a retired senior, to put a down payment on my first home. Life was wonderful until one night in July 2008, I returned home to a house full of smoke, as well as my front & back yards. The smoke was coming from my next door neighbor who was burning a backyard bonfire and was also grilling.

I am asthmatic and also have COPD. Only the use of 4 air filters, inhalers, and a nebulizer for asthma attacks allowed me to get through that night without calling 911. That began the most life threatening experience with which I have had to contend.

Grilling and bonfires continued daily, with many household members on different shifts. Ground level smoke was being carried by the prevailing wind all day and evening. Each night the lid of the grill was left open to smolder. The strong breeze created a stream of smoke that was constant until 3-4 A.M.

I became so sensitive to the wood smoke that I had to hold my breath to get from my car to my front door. It became necessary to use asthma medicine after only a few whiffs of smoke. I also experienced decreased oxygen levels, light headedness, burning eyes, & sinus infections requiring antibiotics. My windows were closed in the summer heat and fall months. Only on rare occasions could I sit in my own yard..

After the failure of over-the-fence talks and unanswered phone calls, I called our State Representative's Office for guidance. Mediation through the Town Fire Marshall was only able to reduce the 8-foot bonfires that were just 50 feet from my house. My neighbor refused to move the grill over to avoid the prevailing wind.. He crumbled and threw my doctor's letter and my letter into my yard. He told the Fire Marshall to not contact him again. I was then advised to contact the resident State Trooper. I declined since my health was deteriorating. The wood smoke continued until the first of November 2008 when the grill was put away for the season.

In another month I will again be faced with this situation. My neighbor is legally permitted to pollute my home with ground level smoke, but would not be allowed to light one cigarette in a grocery store or restaurant because of second-hand smoke.

I was left to fend for myself since there are currently no state or local laws to protect my home, my sanctuary, and my life from this wood smoke situation. Something must be done to help me and others like me who are only asking for the right to breathe clean air in our own homes.