

Dear Members of the Environmental Committee:

We purchased our OWF over thirteen years ago in an attempt to save money, live off our land and do our part to lessen the world's dependence on oil. We watched sadly as others struggled when the price of oil rose to over \$4.00 a gallon. We were unaffected and in fact have saved over \$32,000 for our family.

I am disheartened when I hear all the negative comments made about outdoor wood furnaces. I hear people, who have no first hand knowledge of them spout off about how "dangerous" they are to your health and that they spew noxious smoke 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I am a mother of 2 small boys, ages 6 and 8 and believe me, my children's health and safety is my #1 concern. I would never put my children's health in jeopardy. My children were raised with an OWF and do not suffer from any form of asthma, allergies or other on-going upper respiratory illnesses. They are as healthy as can be. When I hear people claim that these units are unsafe and can cause "me and my family" harm and that we should "ban or severely restrict" our use of them and turn to a "cleaner and more safe" means of heating our home, I am appalled. I don't know of any OWF that has injured anyone. Unfortunately I can not say the same for Propane, Natural Gas, oil or indoor wood heating. With propane, I put my children at risk of gas leaks which can cause deadly explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning. I cannot switch to natural gas as it's not available where I live. And, I would much prefer to raise my boys next to an OWF than a Natural Gas Energy Plant. I can turn back to oil and be a slave to unpredictable fuel costs. We can purchase the oil that fuels global conflict, wars and terrorism and we can add to the horrific incidences of oil spills that destroy our ocean wildlife. With indoor wood burning, we are at risk of deadly chimney fires that destroy homes and kill innocent people weekly in the US.

I can truly attest to the fact that our OWF and those of the owners I know do NOT spew noxious smoke 24/7 nor do they sicken us or cause serious health problems. They do not prevent us from going outside nor do they seep foul smelling air into our homes or the homes around us. There is no cloud of smoke that overhangs our property or the property of our neighbors. I find it hard to believe that those against the use of OWF's fail to see where the "true" pollution and poor air quality reside. I can tell you that when we venture into Hartford I am appalled by the cloud of smog and pollution that is visible over the city when you crest Sunset ridge in East Hartford. I worked for DCF for 8 years and I know that the number of children who suffer from severe asthma live within the city limits of Hartford and other large cities within CT.

I truly feel that heating our home with an OWF is the "safest and most responsible" of the options available to me. I also feel it's a great learning experience for our children. We teach our boys how to hunt, fish, grow food and cut wood to heat our home. If disaster ever hit CT, my family will know how to provide themselves with food, shelter and heat off of the property in which we live. I think that's a huge lesson that all children should learn.

I do agree that there are OWF owners who do not burn responsibly. However, I also believe that 95% of owners, like me, have families and care deeply about burning responsibly and not harming the environment. I don't feel that the responsible user should be penalized. I believe that the current regulations in place are appropriate and effective. I believe that those who do not follow these regulations and burn irresponsibly should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Karen Bradley