

Raised Bill No. 126

February Session, 2010

Referred to Committee on Environment

Introduced by: (ENV)

AN ACT ADDING WOOD SMOKE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH NUISANCE CODE AND CONCERNING OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES.

Chairs Senator Ed Meyer, Representative Richard Roy And Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Jean Breuler and I live in East Haddam, CT. The following explains why wood smoke needs to be added to the public nuisance code.

I find myself at home six months of the year drenched in second hand wood smoke emitted from the continuous morning, noon and night, burning of at least eight neighborhood indoor wood burning stoves, the furthest being 3/10's of a mile away and the closet is 50 feet.

I continuously smell and breathe smoke outdoors and indoors. The dense smoke inverts over my house and permeates all rooms and on one occasion set the smoke detectors off when opening the front door. The entire property is constantly saturated in wood smoke. I have kept fans going in the garage and barn trying to push smoke away. The horses are forced to breathe smoke 24/7. It is difficult to be outside to care for the horses and the property because of having to breathe smoke that instantly makes me feel sick. Smoke has destroyed any ability to live at my home.

Homes today that decide to use wood stoves do not have to care about how their wood smoke trespass might affect a neighbor's health or what health ailments a neighbor might already be suffering with, like asthma or cancer, etc. There is no taking into account how temperatures and/ or wind direction can escalate the smoke trespass upon another. There is no conscience for what deadly chemicals a neighbor might be breathing in when burning trash or plastic, yes that happens, or whether there are neighbors and animals who are outdoors having their lungs corroded with fine particulates caused by the trespass of second hand wood smoke. In these times, the explosion of wood burning stoves is a careless free-for-all that is unlimited and unchecked. And, if you find yourself living with and breathing in second hand wood smoke, there will be nowhere to turn for help. There will be nowhere to run because at anytime, anyplace, anywhere, anyone can just go right ahead, install that wood stove and blow their smoke right at you.

Whether you live in an urban, suburban or a rural setting, unless your home is 3 miles away from the next, you will find yourself, breathing in second hand wood smoke when it is not your choice. You will find yourself suffering and feeling certain that your health is compromised.

You will find yourself voicing your concerns to your local health department, who will claim that any authority to do something about it lies at the state level, and the state level will claim no responsibility because indoor wood stoves are EPA certified, despite the fact that the EPA literature is riddled with warnings of the risks associated with breathing in smoke emitted from certified wood stoves.

If this newly evolved health crisis is not recognized as a real public health concern of the day, then we will all find ourselves at our wits end, getting sick, getting poisoned, being left without a voice and thereby further empowering second hand wood smoke trespass.

I want wood burning stove users to know that they do not have an ultimate license to trespass their wood smoke and poison neighbors because it is objectionable. Humans need to breathe clean air to live and that is a basic human right. I need the air at my home devoid of wood smoke so I can live there and not be made sick.

And that is why I am here today; to first ask that "second hand wood smoke trespass" be recognized as a legitimate health issue of our era and second, that it be added to the public nuisance code so complainants can be heard.

Respectfully submitted,

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