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The Voice of the Connecticut Forest Products Industry

March 7, 2010

Testimony in Opposition to the following Bill:

R.B. No. 126 AN ACT ADDING WOOD SMOKE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH NUISANCE CODE AND CONCERNING OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES.

Submitted by: Joan Nichols – President Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association, Inc.

Senator Edward Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee:

Wood as an alternative heat source has a long standing tradition in Connecticut. It is important under these economic times to provide the citizens of the state of Connecticut with affordable alternatives to fossil fuels for their heating source. The astronomical increase in fuel oil prices in 2008 caused many Connecticut citizens to seek wood as an alternative heating source.

Wood is a renewable resource readily available in Connecticut. A vast majority of the firewood that is utilized in Connecticut is harvested in conjunction with timber harvesting operations. The harvesting of firewood from Connecticut woodlots allows for a more thorough utilization of the trees harvested, while providing the forest land owner with additional income. Firewood is also harvested in conjunction with Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) sales that are designed to improve overall stand quality under a long term forest management plan.

In reviewing the state health code it does not appear that wood smoke could be construed as having similar health threats to the general public as some of the other issues that are addressed in the code such as spoiled or diseased meat, stagnant water, sewage etc.

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Associations strongly urges the defeat of this bill so that the citizens of Connecticut may continue to utilize wood as a renewable, alternative source of heat for their homes. Firewood utilization is critical to the management of Connecticut's forest land while reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association supports the continued regulation of outdoor wood furnaces in compliance with existing legislation, CGS 22a-174k and asks the Connecticut legislature to recognize the current movement by the US EPA to mandate emissions standards by 2011 and the newest technology available in the Phase 2 units. There are many locations in rural Connecticut where outdoor wood furnaces are suitable in conjunction with installation and usage mandated by CGS22a-174k.