

Raised Bill Number 126 Outdoor Wood-burning Furnaces

Chairs Ed Meyer, Representative Richard Roy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Wendy Rondeau and I live in Brooklyn, Connecticut. This is why a state-wide ban of outdoor wood-burning furnaces is needed.

In September of 2005, my neighbor installed an outdoor wood-burning furnace which burns 365 days per year. Even though he was mandated to move it, to comply with current setbacks, the putrid smell of black smoke and toxic gases continue to invade my home, through closed doors and windows. The current regulations do not work. Despite my ongoing requests for help from state and local agencies, we have not been helped. Because of this, I had to hire consultants at my own expense. The laws have failed us, and my family continues to get sick.

The lack of a ban on OWF's has cost my family financial loss, as well as our good health. Our quality of life has been jeopardized. A common misconception is that a "reasonable person" would not be affected by the emissions of an OWF. My house was one of the houses recently studied by Dr. Brown. The particle count measured was so high, it is definitely understandable why we are constantly sick. I have two daughters whose bedrooms face the OWF. They wake up with headaches, sore throats, facial pain, lethargy and nausea. In addition to symptoms they experience, I also have heart palpitations, dizziness and brain fog, a condition characterized by the effects of toxic gases entering into the bloodstream. We have made several trips to the hospital emergency room and doctors offices, creating a vicious cycle of an increased need for respiratory inhalers, nasal steroids, antibiotics, oral steroids, and over-the-counter medicines.

We have chosen to live in rural Connecticut to enjoy fresh country air. This is something we are not able to enjoy. We are not able to open our windows because the gases and smoke are so strong and toxic. How damaging this is for the human body, especially for children, whose fragile respiratory systems are still developing. The brain NEEDS fresh oxygen. Once the particulates, which are attached to the gases, enter our home, they remain for several hours. The majority of indoor air is generated from outdoor air. In the summer, on 90 degree plus days, we breathe in smoke and gases which enter through our air conditioners. Many times, I have had to wash my clothes over again because the smoke enters my dryer vents.

My children do not build snowmen, go sledding, or swing on their country swing. Why not? I will not allow them to breathe in these fumes. We no longer plant our vegetable and flower gardens, which we once enjoyed doing. We do not maintain our property the way we need or would like to. THIS IS HOW WE LIVE. And so, I ask you to consider how life would have been, and continues to be, for your spouse, your children, and yourself if you had endured, for the past 5 years, and still continue to endure, living under these cancer-causing conditions?

If the proposed language of Bill Number 126 remains, instead of gases and smoke entering our home for 12 months, we will still be forced to breathe in these emissions for 6 months. If smoking in restaurants and in public buildings had been banned for only 6 months, or if previous smokers were still allowed to smoke, would that have made sense? This is why it is imperative to pass an immediate state-wide ban on outdoor wood-burning furnaces. Thank you.

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