

To: Senator Edward Meyer, Representative Richard Roy, Co -Chairmen and Members of the Environment Committee

Re: RAISED BILL No. S.B. 126 *AN ACT ADDING WOOD SMOKE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH NUISANCE CODE AND CONCERNING OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES. 2010 Legislative Session – March 8, 2010.*

I urgently appeal to the Environment Committee to immediately ban outdoor boilers. OWBs, or hog fuel furnaces, pollute heavily by spewing toxic fumes, particulates and carcinogens and irrefutably harm our health. The boiler lobbyists want you to believe that the smoke they emit resembles a fireplace. This is not the romanticized Norman Rockwell image of a crackling fire on a cold winter night. To the contrary, OWB smoke and stench spreads wide and hangs low to the ground. I want to be clear, I'm not asking to regulate fireplaces, chimineas, or outdoor fire pits as boiler supporters may suggest.

To illustrate the smoke and odor, imagine standing next to a huge bonfire as buckets of water extinguish the flames, enveloping you in smoke. Or drive past an oil refinery and it's the dizzying, nauseating stench that permeates your car despite closed windows and vents.

Current setbacks are ineffective as I learned firsthand when my neighbor installed one 300 feet away. I was helpless to do anything about the smoke invading my property and home. It seeped through closed windows and doors, permeated clothing and made my house stink. I smelled the stench day and night as the boiler smoldered and fired intermittently, and I smelled it as I tucked my children into bed. The smoke frequently had a pervasive, overwhelming plastic or chemical smell. Since there's no oversight or control over these boilers and they're advertised as capable of burning anything and have been used as alternate waste disposal, how do I know what my neighbor burned? I was forced to breathe the by-product of his burning.

I suffered headaches, nausea, chronic cough, shortness of breath and without any history of asthma, was forced to use an asthma inhaler every winter he burned. A lifelong runner, I was unable to run. My children suffered chronic coughs, nausea and my then 6 year old was also forced to use an asthma inhaler. My mother couldn't visit as she'd cough continuously. My quality of life disappeared and my economic hardship began with that first plume of smoke.

I had no warning that this boiler would be installed and no recourse. The agencies charged with protecting public health on the local, state and national level failed to help me. They were sympathetic at best but mostly indifferent, and pointed to one another

claiming the other had jurisdiction. I had to file a nuisance lawsuit and engage in lengthy, expensive litigation just to breathe smoke-free air on my property and in my own home. In order to have objective, quantitative scientific evidence of the boiler pollution, I hired a scientist who used a continuous monitor (used by U.S. Forest Service to assess and protect forest fire first responders) to conduct a 6 week ambient air test measuring particulates invading my property and home. Excessively high concentrations of particulate pollutants inside and outside the house were recorded and a significant number of days exceeded EPA short term (24 hr.) air quality standards. Over 200 spikes of extremely high particulate pollutants (over 100ug / m<sup>3</sup> and up to 500 ug / m<sup>3</sup>) subjected us to significantly higher cardio respiratory risks than the average urban CT population. Why was it incumbent upon a private citizen to conduct this test while agencies charged with protecting public health stood by?

Boiler advocates and lobbyists claim economic hardship as justification for burning yet the devices cost \$6,000 to over \$10,000. Despite spewing copious amounts of particulate pollutants and carcinogens, advocates claim they're carbon neutral. They'll also say wood is a renewable resource despite taking 30 years for a tree to grow. You'll hear it's patriotic to burn wood and avoid foreign oil or that New Englanders share a cultural imperative to burn. Is it patriotic to smoke out your neighbors? Put scrubbers on your boiler or a dome over it to contain your smoke.

The Attorneys General in New England and NY, along with Nescaum, called for a ban. OWBs have been illegal in parts of Colorado since 1982, banned in WA, MD, and over 35 municipalities in NY. You can't even buy a soda in schools or smoke a cigarette in public yet outdoor wood boilers pollute uncontrolled and unregulated in populated areas. Please don't permit burning 6 mos. of the year and don't grandfather existing units. How can you grandfather a public health hazard?

Theresa Prangle  
Westport CT 06880