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Dear Environmental Committee,

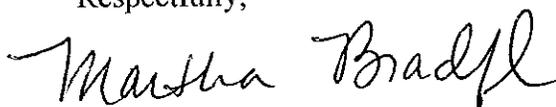
I am writing to you in regards to the proposed bill to ban Outdoor Wood Furnaces in Connecticut. I believe that a ban on these hydronic heaters would be a misguided and detrimental action that would adversely affect a great number of people in our state. Let me start by telling you that although I have lived in Tolland, Connecticut for the past 15 years, I grew up in the city of Lowell, Massachusetts and consider myself a "city girl". My knowledge on any wood burning heating unit was zero up until 2 years ago. I always had natural gas heat until I moved to CT where we use oil heat. For the past couple of years I have worked at Mainline Heating & Supply in Ashford, CT. I have gotten quite an education on alternative heating while working there and feel compelled to share some of that with you.

Many of our customers have not had to spend even \$1.00 on oil since the day they installed their outdoor wood furnace. Instead, they are using a renewable resource (wood), which they are burning responsibly while operating with the proper chimney height. People heat their homes and hot water; farmers heat their barns and other outbuildings and all without any reliance on foreign oil. Also, their heat is usually free due to the fact that they have large pieces of land with plenty of trees. Aren't we, as Americans, looking to gain energy independence? I am 47 years old and have been hearing that message from our government for most of my life. Why would we ban these Outdoor Wood Furnaces when we should instead be encouraging the use of them?

Sure, there are a small percentage of people who are not burning responsibly. They may be burning trash or their chimney stacks may be too low and they are smoking out their neighbors. What about those irresponsible people? I think that their behavior is a crime. I would not want to be the neighbor of one of those people and I would expect the town to shut them down or enforce regulations on chimney height. From everything I hear in the community, I believe we are probably talking about 1% of OWF owners who burn irresponsibly. Why should the other 99% be punished? I believe you should look at more enforcement of the current regulations. Although I do not own one of these units, our building in Ashford is heated 100% by an outdoor wood furnace. We have a 29 foot chimney stack and only burn dry seasoned wood... We are always warm, and in 2 years, I can count on one hand the amount of times that I have even gotten a whiff of wood smoke. I never see it or smell it. That is because we are doing things right up at Mainline and furthermore we are constantly educating our customers on how to do things right.

Another key point to recognize is that there is a whole new generation of OWFs that are highly efficient. They are so efficient that they qualify for the \$1500 Federal Energy Tax Credit and are recommended by the US Environmental Protection Agency on their "**Burn Wise**" website. Please reconsider over regulating Outdoor Wood Furnaces and instead direct your efforts toward the enforcement methods for the regulations that are currently in place. The outlaw of OWFs would be an economic hardship on a great deal of people especially on farmers who have already been hit hard in recent years. Let these people burn responsibly and continue to take some of the burden off of America's dependence on foreign oil.

Respectfully,



Martha Bradford