



ECHO

Ecological Health Organization, Inc.
PO BOX 8232 Berlin, CT 06037 (570) 472-0374
ECHOMCSCT@aol.com www.ECHOMCSCT.homestead.com

March 8, 2010

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, Members of the Environment Committee,

**Ecological Health Organization (ECHO) Supports
HB 126 - An Act Adding Wood Smoke to the Public Health Nuisance Code
and Concerning Outdoor Wood-Burning Furnaces**

In January, 1992-18 years ago ECHO was formed as a statewide nonprofit, advocacy, support, education and referral organization for people with Multiple Chemical Syndrome (MCS) and for others who care about its prevention. We are one of the first organizations in Connecticut linking environmental issues and public health and our MCS members are living proof of the linkages between the environment and health. Many of our members report severe reactions to chemicals found in burning of wood. These reactions include asthma attacks, skin rashes, and burning of the skin, headaches, sore throat, bronchitis and chronic sinusitis.

Wood burning is not only a serious health hazard for people with MCS but for everyone, especially those suffering from asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, allergies and cardiovascular disease.

Smoke from burning of wood results in high concentrations of toxic air pollution at ground level and generates hundreds of toxic compounds – many of them carcinogens. According to a *Clear Air Fact Sheet*, "Particulate pollution is the most important contaminant in our air. ...we know that when particle levels go up, people die. A number of studies also show changes in inflammatory markers in the blood, which are risk factors for heart attack." **Joel Schwartz, Ph.D., Harvard School of Public Health, E Magazine, Sept/Oct. 2002** Health care costs due to trips to the ER, hospitalizations, doctor and medicines all increase with respiratory, cardiovascular illnesses and allergies associated with wood-burning

An EPA Study concludes that breathing wood smoke particles during high pollution day is equivalent to smoking 4 to 18 cigarettes. Wood-burning releases pollutants including the same toxic chemicals found in cigarettes. Even more alarming, twelve chemicals in wood smoke are listed as carcinogens by the U.S. Government; twenty-five chemicals found in wood smoke are indicated as hazardous chemicals with an ATSDR toxicological profile. Some of these chemicals include arsenic, benzene, dioxin, formaldehyde and lead. These are examples of various chemicals that people with MCS have serious health reactions.

Just as cigarette smoke has no boundaries, wood smoke from furnaces can also penetrate inside the home. When your neighbor is burning wood, deadly pollutants are inside your house just as well. Several members of ECHO no longer have a safe haven from the chemicals emitted by wood burning smoke. Their homes are no longer a safe haven to rest and recompensate. Passage of HB 126 will provide them and others who are made seriously ill by wood burning smoke an avenue of protecting their home and their health.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Wysocki
President, ECHO

President
Carolyn Wysocki

Vice President
Sue Reiderman

Secretary
Joyce Kowalczyk

Treasurer
Richard Helmecki

Executive Director
Elaine Tomko

**BOARD
OF DIRECTORS**

- Kristen Aronson
- Nancy Barton
- Connie Eash
- David Evans Esq.
- Richard Helmecki
- Dr Connie Holbrook
- Agnes Jonas
- Joyce Kowalczyk
- Linda Lantz
- Dr Mark Mitchell
- Sue Riedeman
- Elaine Tomko
- Joseph Uricola
- Carolyn Wysocki

MISSION
To safeguard the health and well-being of the environment and its inhabitants.