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Testimony in Favor of S.B. 226

My name is George McColgan. My wife and I are long-time residents of Woodstock, CT., we are forest landowners, and we survived two years living 200 feet from an OWF. We support S.B. 126.

My family has experienced first-hand the health dangers that OWF's cause. We became prisoners in our house. Our health was harmed. We were deprived of the peaceful enjoyment of our property without our consent. I used to lay in bed at night and fear for the safety and health of my family. We were fortunate to have solved our problem in 2007. I am here today to help others in the same situation.

Concerning Section 1 of the proposed ordinance, I have two concerns. The first is that the definition of "endanger the health of persons" is broad and open to subjective interpretation. There is already a cat & mouse game going on between DEP agents and OWF owners in enforcing 05-227, and I'm not sure that this generalized wording doesn't further complicate enforcement.

The second and greater concern is that the section does not deal specifically with OWF's but rather with the general umbrella of "wood smoke emissions". There is nothing that the OWF proponents would rather do to defeat this statute than to enlist the support of wood stove and pellet stoves users.

Pellet and wood stoves produce minimal smoke emissions. They are lightweights. DEP calculated that it would take eighteen EPA certified woodstoves to generate the same amount of pollution as one OWF. And pellet stoves have even lower emissions than wood stoves. An OWF is a pollution machine, pure and simple. It is inherent in the cool-burning technology. Pellet stoves and woodstoves are NOT the problem, and we shouldn't be targeting them. OWF's are the problem, and let's shine the light of truth on the specific problem that we need to address.

Concerning Section 2, I offer the following plea:

In 2005, the General Assembly had the opportunity to ban OWF's but blinked, because of limited experience with them. We have that experience now. We know how dirty and inefficient they are.. We know that it takes a minimum of 1,000 feet for their pollutants to dissipate. We know that raising stack height accomplishes nothing. We know that most of them fail opacity standards when they are running..

Yet, we have victims who are breathing industrial levels of pollutants every day without their consent. They are scattered in small towns in rural parts of this great state. For their sake, I urge you to ban OWF's completely.. Thank you.