

Dear Sirs,

This letter is to voice my support to SB205 an act concerning mercury. My only concern with the bill is that I feel that the five dollar return fee is not enough to encourage people to actively seek and return mercury thermostats. If the fee was doubled to ten dollars, I feel that there would be many marginally employed people who would and could go out, seek and return them as a viable part of their income. It would be well worth the extra dollars spent to keep the environment free of mercury.

In a conversation I had with Dr. Jelle Debours -professor emeritus of geophysics at Wesleyan University, I was told that mercury pools in low spots eventually making its way into wetlands and water bodies. There it sits and reacts with leaves to acidify the water-and then the groundwater as it percolates downward. The water becomes super acidic seasonally in both the summer and the fall-winter seasons when the water is sitting still in the wetlands. This is important to us all because as we pump the water for drinking, the super acidic water leaches metals from pipes, tanks and faucets as it corrodes them.

This is how my family and myself were becoming lead poisoned. I moved onto this property when I was in my early 20's and lived there with my husband for fifteen years. During that time, I became increasingly more ill, watched my husband suffering and my oldest child have unexplainable symptoms. Several of our pets died-the one was autopsied had died of kidney and liver failure and had swelling in the entire alimentary canal. That dog was with us for about a month. My cat died in what I later read could be described as "cat dance fever" in an article about mercury poisoning in Minamoto Bay. The lead was found as we were moving out of that home and had been living in the other home for a month-full environmental testing was never done because my health department declared me "fine".-I was not. Two years later, when I could finally get up and do housework and think more clearly again, I began to wonder about the symptoms I had been having for years and did some research. I had been diagnosed, by my symptoms, with Lyme disease-but I was spontaneously recovering since I had moved out of that house! I began to call around and after YEARS of calls finally found Dr Debours. I explained to him how we had been made to use a surface well to water our nursery plants by our landlord despite my complaints about something in the water. When we pumped out all of the water -at the top of the muck, and the bottom of the water, a metallic substance would come oozing out, coating the potted plants. I was told at the time that it was bog iron. The water had a strange foul odor and an orange/tannic color, would completely dry out your hands and make them smell strange if you touched it. It was all we had to water with outside-we had 10,000 pots of perennials. The worst medical symptoms began after we started using it. Dr Debours had started by explaining that my water would not have been so acidic to leach lead from the pipes if it were not for some other pollutant in the area. I said "-could it be mercury?" He said "Thats exactly what I mean!" He explained to me the seasonal acidity that occurs when water pools in contaminated wetlands making water super acidic. I said "I bet I can tell you when that occurs! It happens around the fourth of July and right after thanksgiving!". He said "How did you know?" I told him, "I was sick every year at those times, year after year"

Sadly, I still dont know for sure if that was what made me and my family so sick. Unfortunately the law does not give me the right to know what I was exposed to. Medical

testing can only go so far. What I know is that there was lead. Years later I was told tetra-ethyl lead too-after I called the state potable water person. Nobody thought I should know! Now I found that tetra ethyl lead would only be present in water with a solvent-like gasoline. Still no additional testing was done. From Dr Debours I learned all metals would have been leached, the copper, iron, possibly cadmium from the galvanized water tank. We replaced the water faucets every few years-to think, I was drinking that in my tea and eating that in every spaghetti dinner.

My daughter has frontal lobe damage-executive skills are gone. Special education CANNOT FIX HER BRAIN. Her life has been made more difficult. Tax dollars were spent to try and teach her coping skills to help her learn. My dollars went to educational testing and lawyer fees instead of summer camp.(I never got reimbursed either.)My younger daughter has some problems-she became comatose within me just before birth and the Doctor found I had gout-how a woman in her 30's could have gout, no one could say. I found later lead causes gout. My husband and my self still suffer with health problems but we are so much better now-I lost almost ten years of my life, all my savings, my business. I have lost organizational skills and communication skills-I have been trying to write this letter for eight years! I used to stutter, my face would twitch on one side. I have a page of other symptoms which disappeared and re appeared twice a year, now mostly have gone! The last years have been a great struggle for our whole family.-A whole family sick.

The point is-this started with mercury. This is just one of its hidden dangers.

Now I live near a lake. At its bottom is brewing a complex brew- bacterial action moving up the food chain puts methyl mercury in the flesh of the fish we used to eat. Di-methyl mercury is out gassing from the lake bottom into the air. If you have been poisoned with mercury, what is the amount you can be exposed to?(ZERO is the best amount to be exposed to- to get what is in you out) How many fish can we eat? What amount of HIGHLY toxic di-methyl mercury is safe to breathe? How much is being produced by my lake-I found out my town of Ridgefield is in the impact zone of a coal fired plant in Norwalk. How much mercury is here now from all the years of coal burning?-in Texas, an impact zone of another plant has put 200ppm into the soil!

How much more can we take?

thanks.

-Laura Stabell
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Ridgefield CT.

Please support this and any other bill which will help the people of this state live healthy lives free of toxins and their hidden dangers.