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*The Voice of the Connecticut Forest Products Industry*

February 8, 2011

**Testimony in opposition to:**

**R.B. 830 AN ACT PROHIBITING CERTAIN OUTDOOR WOOD BURNING FURNACES**

Submitted by: Joan Nichols – President CT Professional Timber Producers Association, Inc.

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Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee:

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association strongly opposes R.B. 830 An Act Prohibiting Certain Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces (OWFs).

Many of our members own and operate outdoor wood burning furnaces and/or supply firewood to the consumer market. These units have operated complaint free since their installation. In fact, over 95% of the outdoor wood burning furnaces currently operating in the state of Connecticut operate complaint free. Wood is a renewable resource, readily available from Connecticut forest lands. The majority of firewood that our membership supplies to the consumer market travels less than 25 miles from its point of origin and is a residual product from commercial timber sales and from silvicultural thinnings to improve the health of Connecticut's forests. The firewood market contributes to the local economy and local jobs.

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association supports additional legislation that would allow new installations of outdoor wood burning furnaces to be Phase 2 units and to increase fines for improper burning practices. Funds from these fines should be available to consumers to retrofit existing units or replace older units with Phase 2 units. This would help rectify the small number of complaints on existing units, which a ban would not address.

A cord of wood sold for \$225 per cord would cost the Connecticut consumer \$538 in oil and over \$1,000 in electricity. The savings are even more significant for OWF owners that cut their own wood, which many do.

We strongly support the continued use of outdoor wood burning furnaces, fueled by a locally grown renewable resource that supports jobs and helps Connecticut citizens heat their homes and businesses in these difficult economic times.

When emissions from automobiles was deemed to be a health hazard we did not ban automobiles. We worked with technology to improve emissions. When we talk about protecting the environment let us not forget the Exxon Valdez disaster in Prince Williams Sound, the BP oil well disaster in the Gulf of Mexico or the more recent natural gas explosion that killed and injured many workers right here in Connecticut. When was the last time a cord of Connecticut grown firewood created a national environmental disaster?

*According to a 2010 UCONN study, sales of Connecticut forest products contributed \$131.5 million dollars in 2007 to the states economy.*