

rSB 830 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES.

February 9, 2011 Public Hearing

Good morning Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy, Ranking Member Roraback, Ranking Member Chapin and distinguished members of the Environment Committee.

I am writing this to you in order to express my feelings regarding the Raised Bill number 830 regarding the outdoor wood-burning furnaces.

I am a resident of Coventry, Connecticut who resides in a 300 year old house that is on the National Register of Historical places. Prior to obtaining my outdoor wood furnace thirteen years ago, I was purchasing 225 gallons of oil every two weeks. This was tightening the purse strings before the prices of oil sky rocketed. Yes I choose to live in an antique house, and yes I can put a wood stove in the living room and have a chimney sleeve for the chimney, but that would take away from the historic charm & value of the house and thus may risk the house being on the National Register of Historic Places. I do live on a farm, so the bill would exempt me and I would still be able to remain operating my stove, but why should a farm be entitled to save money and not a regular homeowner?

My property is in a rural setting and other houses on my street burn wood in their wood stoves in their homes. One of which almost burned to the ground last year caused by a chimney fire. The wood that I burn is clean burning and yes, like every stove does cause smoke on occasion.

I understand that people are burning garbage along with treated woods in the outdoor furnaces, however I don't feel that those of us who burn properly should be punished financially due to a few people who can't follow the rules. That would be the same as banning firearms because of the gang shootings in the city, or banning the sale of alcohol because of a drunk driving fatality. There are countless other incidents that occur in this state and throughout the country that cause an annoyance for some people that are not banned.

What gives the state of Connecticut the right to tell me that I am no longer allowed to heat my home with wood, a renewable resource? I am a single mother of three and cannot afford the \$1000 a month expense of oil. I am currently employed by a municipality for the past 25 years and was a former state employee for seven years so needless to say I am not working at minimum wage. The taxes in this state are among the highest in the country, the employment rate is high and I feel that banning these furnaces is going to only add to the financial burden on an already strapped economy.

I am asking you to please reconsider your bill eliminating outdoor wood furnaces and perhaps develop enforceable laws for people who burn improper materials or do not install the outdoor wood furnaces properly and not punish those of us that burn responsibly.

It is possible, even with job cuts to have DEP or another enforcement official do unannounced periodic checks of these furnaces? It is obvious who has them when you drive by and even an untrained person can tell when something other than wood is being burned.

I am asking you to please not accept the proposed bill and to accept a bill that will ban illegal burning in outdoor furnaces.

Sincerely - Ellen Jamaitus
Coventry, CT