

February 8, 2011

Dear Legislator/Senator,

I urge you to vote NO on Bill No. 830 – An Act Prohibiting the Use of Certain Outdoor Woodburning Furnaces.

My wife and I consider ourselves dedicated conservationists who care deeply about our environment and the land. We both work at professional jobs dedicated to natural resource management, and we also work hard to grow our own vegetables, raise chickens, and produce maple syrup to sell through our local organic farmer. We consider cutting wood part of a life style devoted to living closer to the land and part of our buy local ethic. Wood is a Connecticut grown, extremely abundant renewable natural resource. It can be harvested in a sustainable, ecologically sound manner using scientifically based forestry practices. It was always our dream to own a piece of Connecticut woodlands that we could manage for forestry and wildlife and we were blessed to finally purchase this land, held under a conservation easement with the Joshua's Land Trust. We manage the forest in an ecologically appropriate way to create wildlife habitat while at the same time producing enough fire wood to heat two homes, ours and my Mother's. It is with great pride that I burn wood, cut on my own land, using my own labor and equipment. It gives me a great deal of old fashioned Yankee satisfaction that I am relying on myself for at least some of my energy needs and thereby reducing my dependence on foreign oil, electricity and natural gas, all of which get produced at great environmental cost.

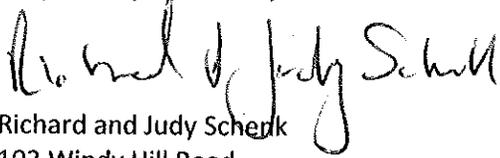
When we purchased our outdoor wood furnace in 2006 it was a legal product and we installed it according to all applicable rules and regulations at that time. It was lawfully sold to us, installed by a licensed contractor and we operate it according to the law. My Mother, who is 87, was comfortable with the idea of an outdoor wood furnace that was placed well away from the antique 1747 Cape she lives in. I can check and load the furnace morning and night without disturbing her, and she doesn't worry about the increased chance of a fire in the house or carbon monoxide buildup. As Chief of our Town's Volunteer Fire Department, I have personally been called to numerous cases of wood stoves causing a carbon monoxide buildup and/or structure fires.

This furnace cost and installation was considerable and to pass a law that would prevent anybody with an existing furnace from continuing to use it except agricultural producers would cause extreme economic hardship on people who legally purchased these boilers. Most of us are making less, yet paying more bills and heating is part of those bigger bills. Heating with wood was part of our strategy to save on ever rising energy costs. How would we ever recover for the investment most of us made in an outdoor furnaces which ranged in price from \$10,000 to over \$20,000 dollars when you add installation? We planned on a life time of use. Is the state going to reimburse us for the loss? Is the state going to subsidize the cost of heating my Mother's house, if the legislature outlaws her heating source?

If there truly is a scientifically demonstrable problem that can be proven after adequate investigation, then I have no problem of passing reasonable measures to minimize pollution. But you can't seek out

and unfairly penalize people who acted within the law after the fact. They should be grandfathered in and allowed to continue to use their furnaces. If there are issues with a few existing furnaces, then work through the existing regulatory and enforcement framework that is already in place at DEP. As with any technology, cleaner, more efficient methods can be found if the right incentive is put in place. Work with the industry and the EPA to establish Federal regulations and phase them in over time, so that the industry can respond without going out of business. I'm all for a healthy environment, but shutting down an entire option for meeting part of our energy needs is ridiculous; let's improve it as we move forward, and not ban it.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard and Judy Schenk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R" and "J".

Richard and Judy Schenk
103 Windy Hill Road
Hampton, CT