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State of Connecticut OWF Hearing Letter

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My name is William Thiessen. I reside at 103 Currituck Road in Newtown, Connecticut. I am one individual in this State of Connecticut that has been bothered by wood smoke from an OWF. I am a retired widower, and live in a home that my wife and I had built for the enjoyment of our retirement years. Suddenly, in mid-August of last summer, that enjoyment was rudely taken away from me by the invasion of offensive wood smoke infiltrating my yard and house all hours of the day.

Late summer and early fall breezes are supposed to be enjoyed after a long hot summer. However, this was not meant to be for me. With the acrid smell of smoldering wood smoke throughout the day, it meant that I could not sit on my front porch to read; or on my back porch to eat breakfast, lunch or dinner; or to hang out wash; or to enjoy my hobbies of vegetable gardening and swimming. Instead, it meant living in a closed up stuffy house; and grabbing the pillow off my bed at night to sleep in the basement when the odor of smoke got too much to bear.

Regulations, regarding footage requirements of 200 or 500 feet, did not protect me since I am located approximately 1,500 feet from this furnace. However, I don't believe our legislators were thinking about people operating these furnaces other than in the winter time when the smoke is suppose to go straight up into the crisp, dry air. I can attest, even this notion is a fallacy, by the fact fine smoke particle measurements occasionally exceed 250,000 counts per cubic foot in my closed up house even in the wintertime. The State Statutes do not take into account the effects of atmospheric conditions or the surrounding terrain. The smoke is kept at ground level by heavy moist air; and, in my case, by the canopy effect of tree leaves from a tree line that extends to my house from the location of the furnace.

I was dismayed to find out that I had no recourse to stop someone from dumping their toxic waste into my yard and inside my house, as well as causing me health problems and discomfort. I had a chronic sore 24 hours a day for a period of three weeks. Since mid-August, I suffered from sore throats 37 out of a period of 84 days. At one point, my doctor advised me to leave my house for a week in order to give my throat a chance to heal. Other health issues included difficulty in breathing, burning and tearing of eyes, lung congestion, headaches, and lose of appetite.

Complaints to the CT DEP and Newtown Health Department only created frustration. I am hoping that Legislators in Hartford will adopt changes to the OWF statutes so that residents of this State can, again, enjoy their homes and yards in good health.

Respectfully submitted,

William Thiessen