



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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Testimony in Opposition to:

Raised Bill No. 84: AN ACT CONCERNING OUTDOOR WOOD FURNACES

Submitted by: Henry Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

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

Connecticut Farm Bureau cannot support Raised Bill 84 as currently drafted as it does not allow for use of outdoor wood furnaces during the summer months for legitimate agricultural purposes. Farmers using OWF's to generate hot water for sanitation or for root- zone heating in propagation greenhouses for example would not be able to utilize this important technology to reduce costs. Any consideration of a summer ban should incorporate an exemption for legitimate agricultural purposes.

We strongly support the use of alternative fuels not only for farmers but for all citizens of the state of Connecticut. Wood heat has long been a viable fuel alternative to fossil fuels for Connecticut citizens. Farmers, as well as thousands of Connecticut residents depend on outdoor wood burning furnaces to heat their homes and businesses without negatively impacting their neighbors. Wood is a renewable resource, growing in abundance in Connecticut.

In 2005, the Legislature enacted Public Act 05-227 An Act Concerning Clean Air Strategies, which regulates the location, stack height, usage of outdoor wood furnaces and enforcement by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and local municipalities. There are many locations in rural Connecticut where outdoor wood furnaces are installed in compliance with PA 05-227 and the vast majority operate without problems . Technological advances in the manufacture and retrofit of existing units continue to improve efficiency and reduced emissions. We would support legislation requiring that all future outdoor wood furnaces being installed in Connecticut meet standards that would utilize adoption of the latest in clean burning technology.

Connecticut Farm Bureau recognizes that all outdoor wood furnaces should be operated correctly to minimize the impact on neighboring property owners. We would suggest that the fines for misuse of outdoor wood burning furnaces be increased and that those funds be made available to consumers to retrofit existing units or replace older units. This would help address the small number of units that are bothersome to their neighbors.

In these difficult economic times, it is more important that the legislature support the use of renewable alternative fuels for all Connecticut citizens and the jobs associated with distributing and installing outdoor wood burning furnaces, and the firewood producers who supply wood to those consumers who do not cut their own.

Connecticut Farm Bureau Association - *The Voice of Connecticut Agriculture*