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**Testimony of the American Lung Association in Connecticut
in Support of Raised Senate Bill No. 84 An Act Concerning
Outdoor Wood Furnaces**

February 21, 2012

Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Good Morning Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and other Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Michelle Marichal and I serve as the Interim Director of Health Promotion and Public Policy at the American Lung Association (ALA) in Connecticut. The American Lung Association is a not-for-profit public health organization dedicated to fighting lung disease through research, education and public policy.

ALA in Connecticut supports the Raised Senate Bill No. 84, An Act Concerning Outdoor Wood Furnaces which seeks to prohibit the use of wood-burning furnaces between May first and September thirtieth.

But please do not mistake our support of this measure as a statement that we are satisfied with state policy regarding these pollution sources.. To ban their use during part of the year is a step forward but it is not a resolution to the problems caused by these units. Our nationwide policy on these devices could not be more clear. "The American Lung Association strongly opposes the use of outdoor wood fired boilers for heating and other purposes and supports measures to greatly reduce emissions from or eliminate outdoor wood fired boilers."

A partial prohibition of the use of wood-burning furnaces would bring some relief to families who have wood smoke entering their homes on a continual basis. It is better than the status quo but it doesn't mean that for the other seven months of the year neighbors' health is not at risk. According to scientific evidence brought forth by the Environmental Protection Agency particle exposure from wood smoke can lead to both long- and short-term health problems. Potential health problems include:

an increase in respiratory symptoms, a decrease in lung function, aggravated asthma, development of chronic bronchitis among many others¹.

We urge you to take this step to provide some relief now but also to commit to taking stronger actions that will protect people year round from the toxic pollution from OWFs.

The American Lung Association in Connecticut recognizes that minimum setbacks or stack height requirements do not provide assurance that the emissions from these units will not pose a threat to human health. Other New England states have recognized this fact and their law contains a provision that defines an air quality violation as smoke crossing a neighbor's property line for more than 12 minutes in any hour. While this may not be a perfect solution, it does point out the need for a clear and enforceable definition of a violation against a neighbor's private property. Although seventeen Connecticut towns passed ordinances to ban outdoor wood furnaces this is not an issue that should be done town by town. Wood smoke infiltration from a neighbors OWF is as dangerous in one community as it is in another.

We appreciate your on-going efforts to address outdoor wood furnaces as well as wood smoke pollution in general and urge you to pass this measure and follow up with additional public health protections. The American Lung Association in Connecticut is committed to finding solutions to these environmental problems.

Thank you,



Michelle Marichal
CT Interim Director, Health Promotion and Public Policy
American Lung Association in Connecticut

¹Environmental Protection Agency, *Health Effects of Breathing Woodsmoke*
http://www.epa.gov/burnwise/pdfs/woodsmoke_health_effects_jan07.pdf