



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE March 22, 2013

Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, Commissioner, (860) 509-7101

Senate Bill 1134 - AN ACT CONCERNING OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) provides the following information regarding senate bill 1134.

The DPH has received numerous health related complaints from citizens living near outdoor wood-burning furnaces (OWFs). Citizen complaints include: respiratory irritation, asthma exacerbation, burning eyes and headaches. These health effects are consistent with those effects described in the scientific literature related to wood smoke from OWFs. The literature also identifies more serious health effects associated with exposure to wood smoke and particulate matter from OWFs. These effects include irregular heartbeats, heart attacks, premature death and increased cancer risk.

Senate bill 1134 would require that all new OWFs sold in Connecticut comply with the US EPA's Voluntary Phase 2 Standards for OWFs. The DPH understands that Phase 2 certified OWFs emit less particulate matter associated with wood smoke. Any decrease in particulate matter emitted by OWFs would result in less health risk to individuals living near an OWF. It is unclear if the decreased emissions from Phase 2 OWFs would result in particulate levels such that most health risks would be mitigated. However, the requirement for Phase 2 OWBs will prevent OWBs that are built with older technology and which produce significant amounts of smoke and particles from being sold and operated in Connecticut.

The DPH recommends a change to Section (d) of the bill, as it would be inappropriate for the DPH and local health directors to enforce the provisions of §22a-174k of the General Statutes, which pertains to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The DPH recommends that the language be changed to "The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, or the municipality may order the owner or operator of any outdoor wood-burning furnace to remove, render permanently inoperable or discontinue the sale of any furnace that does not comply with the requirements of subsection (b) or (c) of this section, as

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applicable.” The DPH appreciates DEEP’s willingness to support this change and will continue to work in collaboration with DEEP and other state agencies as this bill moves forward.

The DPH also recommends the deletion of (f) as it is unnecessary. Authority for DPH and local health to order abatement of nuisances is well established in existing statute and practice. Local health directors currently have the authority to order abatement of a nuisance under Connecticut General Statutes §19a-206(b) and §19-13-B2 of the Regulations of CT State Agencies. Both the statute and regulation have been used to take action to abate air pollution from an OWF.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department’s view on this bill.

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