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Environmental Quality Board
December 02, 2009

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

P.O. Box 8477

Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

Regarding: Outdoor Wood Fired Boilers - Proposed

Rule Making

Dear Board Members:

We read, with great interest, the outline of the proposal for regulating Outdoor Wood Fired Boilers within the Commonwealth of PA. We personally have experienced the negatives of these 'furnaces'. In 2002, one had been installed within 150 feet of our home in the borough of Somerset PA. At times we literally had to leave our home due to the smoke and odor in our home from this outdoor wood boiler. Our home has new windows and doors and still the odor and smoke entered our home so badly that we had to leave it. The furnace owner burned low grade coal and the smell and taste of sulfur was overwhelming. Our vehicles would be soot covered and odor would be inside them from the smoke from the furnace. Finally, the Borough of Somerset(PA), along with help from the Dept. of Air Quality Control and our attorney, contacted the owner of this boiler and had him remove it. Then the borough created an ordinance banning the use of these furnaces within our borough.

Therefore, we are writing in SUPPORT of the state wide regulation of the Outdoor Wood Fired Boilers. Great emphasis should be put forth on regulating the existing outdoor boilers, and the sooner the better. As well as regulating the installation of new ones. Many folks are being denied normal use of their home and property because some of their neighbors are using outdoor boilers and causing smoke, odor and soot to greatly affect their neighbors. Neighbors with health issues, COPD, asthma, etc. are going to emergency rooms with breathing problems. The neighbors try talking to the furnace owners to no avail. Infact, some have fallen totally out with their neighbors over the nuisance of these furnaces. Many people being affected by these furnaces are afraid to come forth and complain, (as we were before it got so bad that we were out of our home more than in it) due to retaliation. An option to remain anonymous should be considered in the reporting of a nuisance outdoor wood fired boiler.

We also SUPPORT having them shut down during the summer months. These months most owners use them to heat their water, and they still smoke and cause odor to those that like to line dry their washed clothing and to those wishing to put up their windows in the summer time for fresh cool air. Plus, those with health issues are not able to enjoy the outdoors due to the furnaces still smoking in the summer months.

Also, we SUPPORT regulating the fuel that is burned in them. One local man has a trailer load of used tires delivered to him each fall so he can use them as fuel in his outdoor furnace. His neighbors are at a loss with what to do to get rid of or regulate this nuisance and the odor and dirt from burning the tires.

Once (if) this proposal is approved, it should be published in each community newspaper and on the radio/TV so that those being affected by one of the outdoor boilers will know whom to contact for help in getting the one, two or three located near them regulated.

We SUPPORT the 150 feet property line setback for ANY type of property and for existing furnaces as well as new installations! As well as the stack height! From our experience with the one that was in Somerset PA, the owners manual of the Mahoning furnace, at that time, stated that any stack tampering would result in the warranty being voided. The stack on the one here in Somerset PA was at 30 feet and we still got smoke and odor from it.

Many people in our area of Somerset County PA are hiding these outdoor boilers in buildings, garages or shacks, but the trail of heavy smelly smoke is a sure sign that there

is one in the building. Several fire companies have been called to fires caused by these outdoor wood boilers. They overheat and burn the building that they are in and have caused damage to neighboring homes as well. One local man, Mr. Jim Henry, was cleaning his outdoor wood burner and was burned so badly that he died two days later. Shouldn't the INSURANCE companies rate the owners of these outdoor wood boilers as a risk. They've been causing fires and even death to some of their owners.

In order to regulate all of the existing outdoor wood boilers, there needs to be a way to 'find' them and bring them under compliance other than a neighbor reporting it. If they are 'hidden' in a building it still needs to be regulated. As I mentioned earlier, many folks fear retaliation. The existing outdoor wood boilers should NOT be 'grandfathered' into the regulations as they are the ones that started this problem and created the complaints to begin with.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our experience and extend our SUPPORT in the regulation of the Outdoor Wood Fired Boilers.

Kind Regards,

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