

TESTIMONY REGARDING S.B.-126
AN ACT ADDING WOOD SMOKE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH NUISANCE
CODE AND CONCERNING OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNANCES

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and the members of the Environment Committee, my name is Andres F. Arteaga. I am here today to share my concerns with SB-126.

I support legislation that bans outdoor wood burning boilers (OWBB), except for uses removed from residential areas. Wood smoke is a significant contributor to both air pollution and adverse health effects. Chemically similar to cigarette smoke, wood smoke also shares the same harmful results, including exacerbation of asthma and allergies, increased risk for respiratory infections and coronary disease, and acute and chronic bronchitis. Wood smoke affects everyone; however the developing lungs of unborn and very young children can be especially compromised by the scarring caused by wood smoke, leading to decreased resistance to respiratory infection. Failing a complete ban, I support taking up the examples of our New England neighbors and require all OWBB comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Phase II standards for particular matter.

I do not support adding wood smoke to the public health nuisance code. The precedent set by other states is regulation through the Environmental Protection Agency. This is the model used by Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. There is no need to add wood smoke to the nuisance code, as Connecticut local health directors are already empowered to follow up on wood smoke complaints and have successfully done so. Requiring local public health to follow up on wood smoke complaints prevents local directors of health from using resources in a manner they see fit to maximize the health of their communities.

To support the health of all of Connecticut's citizens I support a ban on all OWBB, with an exception for uses removed from residential areas. I oppose unnecessarily adding wood smoke to the public health nuisance code as this redundancy will have unintended negative consequences for local public health. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before this committee.