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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

SECRETARY'S OFFICE

FEB 16 2010

DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

February 9, 2010

Environmental Quality Board
P.O. Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

Re: Proposed Regulation of Outdoor Wood-Fired Boilers
39 Pa. Bull. 6068 (October 17, 2009)

Dear Environmental Quality Board:

As members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, we support strong regulations to reduce pollution from outdoor wood-fired boilers. We urge the Environmental Quality Board to adopt tough rules that will protect neighbors.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, fine particle pollution is associated with heart disease, lung disease, and premature death. Children and the elderly are especially sensitive to its effects. Just one wood boiler can emit as much fine particle pollution as two heavy duty diesel trucks, 45 passenger cars, 1000 oil furnaces, or 1800 gas furnaces. Just one wood boiler can emit enough fine particle pollution to violate EPA health standards 150 feet away. Wood boilers also emit cancer-causing pollution. There are thousands of wood boilers operating across the state.

In addition to threatening health, these units have severe effects on neighbors' quality of life. At some homes, neighbors can no longer stay outside because the smoke and fumes are so thick. Then again, citizens also report burning eyes, sinuses, throats and lungs, even inside their homes.

The Board has proposed regulations that we believe will reduce these effects. We support Board proposals on cleaner EPA Phase 2 units, clean fuels, and information for wood boiler purchasers. We believe Board rules on smokestack heights and setbacks from property lines are a good start, but that the Board must ensure these provisions are strong enough to result in protection from health and nuisance effects. Most importantly, the Department of Environmental Protection must enforce these rules, and must assist local authorities in responding to wood boiler complaints.

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We urge strong action by the Board to protect the public health and let citizens live safely on their property. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Greg Vitali
Babette Joseph
Michael O'Brien
Barbara McIlvaine Smith
Timothy P. Briggs
David R. Kessler
Steve Santarsiero
Vanessa Lowery Brown

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