

From: daniel alward [dcalward@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009 9:09 PM
To: EP, RegComments
Subject: Comments on PROPOSED RULEMAKING for Outdoor Wood-Fired Boilers [25 PA.CODE CHS. 121 AND 123]

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Environmental Quality Board:

Since 1992 I have lived in a house on a spacious, semi-rural hillside just outside of Franklin, PA in Venango County. For most of those years I thought that there could not be a better place to live. That perception began to change about 6 years ago when my nearest neighbor installed an outdoor wood-fired boiler.

At first I simply didn't like the smell of the smoke, but didn't think that much of it otherwise. After about two years though I began to suspect that my health was being affected by that year-round, unpleasant smokey air. That OWB has caused or at least aggravated respiratory problems. When I am way from home, I breath fairly clearly. When I am home I sneeze and sniffle and feel great sinus discomfort.

The offensive wood burner is probably 500 feet away from my house and is in operation year-round. Anytime I walk outside I can smell the smoke even when it can't be seen. The shape of the hillside where I live forms a bowl for the smoke to linger in. The air that surrounds my house is permeated by the smokey odor - always.

I did let my neighbor know how much the smoke bothered me a few years ago. He said it bothered him too and that his daughter was having breathing problems. But he has continued to operate the smoke belcher year-round. I couldn't protest in any stronger terms to my neighbor without being prepared to find a different place to live. My neighbor, the smoke belcher operator also happens to be my landlord. He's generally a nice person, but would surely be offended if I insisted that he cease operating the OWB. I would very likely be told to simply find another place to live. So I can't really complain effectively out of fear of being evicted.

At this point I have decided that I have no choice but to find another house to live in. I am actively searching for a house to buy in town. As much as I love living in a rural setting I am not even considering buying a house in the country out of fear that some rural neighbor will decide to selfishly install and operate an outdoor wood-fired boiler.

OWB operation is a very selfish and inconsiderate way to produce heat. I suppose the OWB owners feel that they are somehow "sticking it to the man" because they have found some degree of energy independence. But the price for their selfishness is a severely diminished quality of life for all who live nearby.

My OWB operating neighbor burns all manner of trash: wet wood, rotten wood, green wood and lumber scraps. About once a month during the warm months he fetches large trailer loads of cut lumber scraps from who-knows-where. I don't know if it is treated wood or not. I do know that for the past couple of months the smokey air has had a sickly sweet smell to it.

An outright ban on outdoor wood-fired boilers would be fine by me, but short of that, regulations to force OWB operators to be considerate would be the next best thing.

I suppose that the OWB owners will claim that their rights are being infringed on or that they will suffer financial loss if they have to cease using their smoke belchers any old way they see fit. Of course that is outright baloney. Nobody has a right to ruin their neighbors quality of life. If it means financial loss for them, then I guess that's just the price one pays for being so inconsiderate.

Daniel Alward
378 Rosemont Farm Road
Franklin, PA 16323
814 437 9874
dcalward@gmail.com