

**From:** Judy [jboorech@atlanticbb.net]  
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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
COMMISSION

First comment sent 12/19/09 .....

I read an editorial letter recently in our local newspaper saying that the DEP was accepting public comments on the issue of outdoor woodburning stoves through January 4th. I have direct experience with an outdoor wood burner in the village of Elk City (Elk Twp. Clarion County).

I have done research on them online and have found that several states have enacted legislation to regulate them and to help protect their citizens from their pollution, but not Pennsylvania. I found a sample ordinance on the DEP website so I know the DEP is aware that they are a serious problem. I contacted my local state representatives about the need for regulation but they told me to contact our local government since this should be left up to them. So I collected data from the internet as well as making a copy of the PA DEP sample ordinance, but when my husband took it to a township supervisors' meeting they looked at it but refused to do anything. They wouldn't even keep the information.

So we are stuck here very unhappy when the wind comes from the south or it is still and we get smog. There are no houses on his side of the highway close enough to be bothered, but there are 5 families on our side that get the pollution depending how the wind blows. We aren't even safe in the winter. We sometimes get southerly winds ahead of a cold front and when our gas furnace runs it draws in the smoke and pollutants. It is particularly nasty when he adds coal along with the wood producing a thick, nasty-smelling smoke made worse by the way these outdoor furnaces tend to smolder and burn up less of the toxic gases than indoor furnaces. Our next-door neighbor is sensitive to the coal smoke, too, and has commented more than once about waking up with a terrible headache from the coal smoke drawn in by her furnace.

It's a bigger problem in the summer. We often have days with breezes from a southerly direction and need to keep our doors and windows closed to keep out the smoke. It costs us extra money to run our A/C on those days when we might have been comfortable if we had been able to keep the doors and windows open and let the breezes blow through. It is a huge pain in the butt having a wind shift and having to hurry to close all the doors and windows in time to keep the house from stinking. It is hard to plan picnics or even yardwork because you never know when you will have wind from the wrong direction that makes being outdoors very unpleasant.

These are regulations we would like to see:

1. No new outdoor furnaces built within 1000 feet of other homes
2. Chimneys required to be higher than the closest roofline .... every one new and existing ( the one here has a short smokestack right in line with our windows)
3. Only allow the burning of dry, seasoned firewood (not trash, coal, etc. that release a toxic soup of chemicals)
4. Ban their use during warm weather months .... at the least June through August (May through September would be even better)

My Mom has a friend living in the village of Monroe (Beaver Twp. Clarion County) who has the same problem with an outdoor woodstove stinking up their neighborhood, too.

You may ask why we don't just move. We like our home, other than the sometimes stinky air. And if there are no regulations, the same thing could happen in our new location. Besides, who would buy our home? If the outdoor wood stove had been there in 1998, we wouldn't have bought this house. All we want is some help to breathe easier in our home and for PA to step up to the plate with regulations to help with that. Other states have done that. At least a few communities have come through in our area with regulations .... Clarion and Oil City come to mind. But the rest of us who don't have a local government willing to help need relief ASAP from this unwanted second-hand smoke.

Please take this seriously and really do something .... no more lip service.

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Additional comments 01/04/10 .....

We have recently discovered that a second outdoor woodburner has been put into use a few homes to our east. We did not see it being put in due to buildings in the way. One day recently there was a strong smell of coal in the air but the wind was not blowing from the direction of the outdoor woodburner that we have put up across the highway directly to our south. We saw thick smoke coming up behind a house to our east and my husband walked to a vantage point in the back of our property and saw the outdoor furnace and short smokestack belching the acrid smoke. So we need help more than ever since we only have 2 safe-breathing wind directions left.

For over 20 years, before we moved here, we lived a similar distance from a house that had an indoor furnace in which both wood and coal were burned. We never smelled anything from it at our home, even though the winds often came from that direction. Why? .... because it burned more efficiently and put out less pollutants/carcinogens than the smoldering outdoor furnaces. Also it had a high chimney above the roofline of their 2-story house to disperse the smoke better (rather than being at the same level as our windows) and was not used during the warm-weather months.

We sure hope something is done soon to impose much-needed regulations on the outdoor furnaces.

Larry & Judy Boorech