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150 Twinbrook Rd., Bear Creek Twp., PA 18702  
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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

**SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD PROPOSED RULEMAKING TO AMEND 25 PA. code Chapters 121 and 123 - OUTDOOR WOOD-FIRED BOILERS and [39 Pa.B. 7012]**

Environmental Quality Board, Rachel Carson State Office Building, 16th Floor, 400 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101-2301) E-MAIL : [RegComments@state.pa.us](mailto:RegComments@state.pa.us)

Many parts of New England have taken the lead by banning outdoor wood boilers in order to protect the health of their citizens. Now is the time for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to lead and show that this state also cares about the health of all its citizens too.

Breathing wood smoke is a serious health hazard in Pennsylvania. "The elderly, newborns, children, adults who exercise rigorously and those with existing heart and lung disease are most at risk for premature death due to particle pollution exposure. (*American Lung Association, "The Perils of Particulates", 1-800-LUNG-USA*). Many people with these conditions have severe reactions to chemicals found in burning of wood. These reactions include asthma attacks, skin rashes, and burning of the skin, headaches, sore throat, bronchitis and chronic sinusitis.

*Burning Issues* fact sheet states: "Children's health studies document that living in homes where wood is burned, and in communities where wood smoke is prevalent, the wood smoke causes decreases in lung capacity and increases in asthma attacks, frequency and severity of general respiratory illness, emergency room visits and school absences." More than 8 million children have been diagnosed with asthma in this country. We expect our state to protect and guard their health and prevent further illness.

"An EPA Study concludes that breathing wood smoke particles during high pollution day is equivalent to smoking 4 to 18 cigarettes. Wood-burning releases pollutants including the same toxic chemicals found in cigarettes. Even more alarming, twelve chemicals in wood smoke are listed as carcinogens by the U.S. Government; twenty-five chemicals found in wood smoke are indicated as hazardous chemicals with an ATSDR toxicological profile. Some of these chemicals include arsenic, benzene, dioxin, formaldehyde and lead.

Another EPA publication says "Short-term exposures to particles (hours or days) can aggravate lung disease, causing asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and may also increase susceptibility to respiratory infections. In people with heart disease, short-term exposures have been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmias." (*Particle Pollution and Your Health*)

And wood smoke can also penetrate inside the home. "When your neighbor is burning wood, deadly pollutants are inside your house as well." This quote is from *Wood Smoke - One of America's Largest Sources of Pollution That Is Responsible for 30,000 Deaths Each Year*. It also says that heating with a wood stove in just one season, "generates as much pollution as driving a car 130,000 miles."


Pennsylvania's own Allegheny County Health Department brochure regarding emissions from Outdoor Woodboilers says that, "Health effects due to smoke inhalation are common and varied. Wood-fired boilers emit unhealthy levels of pollutants, such as particulate matter, dioxin, carbon monoxide, hydrochloric acid, and formaldehyde. And, "Particulate matter is emitted by boilers in large amounts. Particulate pollution is a growing problem in Allegheny County and is associated with several health effects such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, and premature death." (Allegheny County Health Department, Bruce W. Dixon, M.D., Director, Pittsburgh, Pa 15213)

I become very ill from the chemicals in wood-smoke fumes. Regulations are not the answer to preventing illness or exacerbation of illness in vulnerable populations; a total ban of wood-boilers is the only way to keep our citizens healthy in Pennsylvania. Please BAN all outdoor wood-fired boilers in our state.

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Sincerely,

  
Marie Elaine Tomko 570-472-0374

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD