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Environment Quality Board

P O Box 8477

Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

DEC - 7 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Dear PA Environment Quality Board,

In September of this year, I installed an outdoor wood burning (OWB) furnace. Unbeknownst to me, there was pending regulations regarding how these units had to be installed, set back rules and emission changes. When I found out about these proposed changes, I was upset with the furnace company for not informing me of the possible changes I would have to make regarding the use of my OWB furnace.

After reading through the proposed rule changes, I can see where some of these changes make sense. Especially if a person is living near a homeowner in a city or town and has to breath smoke from one of these units that has been installed right next to their property. However, I don't understand the smoke stack requirements being two feet higher than the nearest residence since no matter how high the stack or chimney is, smoke is smoke and will still contain the same amount of pollutants. Also, atmospheric conditions affect the way smoke will linger or dissipate once it comes out of the smoke stack, no matter the height of the chimney. I feel that if these requirements are passed, some current owners of OWB furnaces will no longer be able to use them because they will be unable to meet some or all of these new regulations. Also, by mandating these changes, it will also impact the performance of some of these units.

I live in a very rural area and have no neighbors within a quarter mile of my house and OWB furnace. Our county (Perry) and township (Toboyne) currently have no regulations regarding the use of these OWB furnaces. With these new regulations, will I have to raise the height of my chimney two feet higher than my house? I should be the person to determine whether the smoke coming out of my wood burner is harming me and my family, not a government agency. I located my furnace on the side of my property because of the wind direction in the winter months. On the majority of the winter days, any smoke coming out of my wood furnace will be going away from my house.

I would hope that if you do pass any of these regulations, you consider grandfathering them in and not make some blanket decision that will be very expensive to owners of these units and not totally solve the problem. Give the furnace manufacturers some guidelines that they need to meet within a reasonable timeframe. I am sure that this approach would be more acceptable to all concerned parties. In addition, I would think these furnace manufacturers could also come up with some device to trap most of these pollutants from getting into the air.

I only hope that you consider both sides of the problem and come up with a solution that is acceptable to all parties.

Sincerely,

Craig R. Zerby