



Connecticut State Grange

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 830, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES

The Connecticut State Grange believes that, when installed and used properly, outdoor wood burning furnaces are an excellent source of heat that uses a renewable source of fuel and reduces our dependence on foreign oil. When trees are harvested for timber there is much wood contained in the limbs and branches that is not suitable for sawing into lumber. If left in the forest to deteriorate, this wood will eventually decay, but in the meantime it can be a significant source of fuel for forest fires. When removed and used in wood burning furnaces it improves the health of our forests while creating an additional source of revenue for the forester. Today many farmers in Connecticut are finding it extremely difficult to maintain their farming operations as a viable business. Like other businesses, they are looking for ways to reduce their costs. Using wood burning furnaces and wood produced on their farms significantly reduces the cost of heating their buildings.

The key words, however, are installed and used properly. Unlike oil or gas fired furnaces, where the homeowner can set the thermostat and forget about the furnace, a wood burning furnace requires frequent attention and adjustment to the draft and damper controls to safely obtain the most heat with the least pollution. Several towns have passed local ordinances and other are considering ordinances that prohibit the use of wood burning furnaces primarily because of the air pollution they create, even when installed and used in compliance with existing laws and regulations. Arbitrarily banning all wood burning furnaces because some people are not operating them properly is not the proper solution to the problem. What is needed is education to teach people how to properly manage and operate these furnaces. While the Grange supports Raised Bill 830 in its present form, we would recommend that the Department of Environmental Protection and/or the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service develop and offer courses to instruct people in the proper installation, care and use of wood burning furnaces. We do not believe any additional legislation is necessary to authorize these courses.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

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