

Report of Environment and Human Health, Inc's wood smoke project funded for the year September 8, 2015 to September 8, 2016 and partially supported by the Forrest and Frances Lattner Foundation.

Report submitted by Patricia Taylor, Project Director and Deputy Outreach Director for Environment and Human Health, Inc.

Project Goals

- Encourage municipal governments to ban OWFs.
- Empower local Departments of Health to enforce wood smoke issues.
- Educate and assist residents on their risks and rights pertaining to OWFs and wood smoke.

The underlying principle of this project has been to empower Local Departments of Health to help protect the public from wood smoke issues by using all available state and local statutes, ordinances, and zoning regulations. Response at the local and state agencies has been positive to very positive about Environment and Human Health, Inc.'s work on this project.

Positive Results

Contact was made with 150 Connecticut towns and cities. Along with the 19 municipalities that had already banned outdoor wood furnaces (OWFs), all 169 towns and cities in Connecticut are accounted for.

Local Health Departments visited in Connecticut

There were 70 Local Departments of Health contacted representing 150 towns. Many Local Health Departments serve a number of towns.

“Visits” that included an actual meeting -

- 14 Departments of Health (Directors, Assistant Directors, Sanitarians)
- 15 Municipal Leaders (Mayors, First Selectmen, Town Managers)
- 9 Land Use Officials (Planners, Zoning Officers, Coordinators)
- 4 Building Inspectors

2 Fire Marshals

Positive Outcomes

1. In process - 3 towns have said they are working on regulations to ban outdoor wood furnaces: Derby, Farmington, and Cromwell.
2. **Good possibilities** – 4 towns are publicly discussing materials: Columbia, Easton, Mansfield and Washington.

We presented in person in Columbia, Easton, and Washington. Columbia said no, at present, but the Town Administrator wants me to stay in touch because she's supportive of a ban. In Easton, the Town Planner and Planning and Zoning Commission are reviewing the material as they update Easton's Town Plan and Zoning Regulations. Mansfield's Town Manager has submitted materials for public review and there has been local discussion about which authority is appropriate. The topic is under review by Land Use officials in Washington.

3. When proposals for ordinances or regulations are not immediately taken up – We suggest seasonal bans, additional discussion within town bodies, outreach to other local officials and groups, updates, and a request to rethink. I am in positive email or phone communication with a good number of local health and municipal officials, especially town planners.
4. **EHHI's materials are on the agenda at two upcoming regional planning meetings:**

In October, the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments will include the topic of OWFs and their ban in their agenda for the Regional Planning Commission meeting. This is a body of Town Planners who serve 19 communities in Connecticut. They have EHHI materials and my offer to present at the meeting is under consideration.

In November, We have been invited to present to municipal and health officials by the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH). NDDH serves 12 towns.

Negative Outcomes

1. 5 towns have said "No": Columbia, Lyme, Milford, Westport, and Woodstock. I am still working on changing minds and continue to send polite, positive updates to these towns.

2. Some towns have deferred a decision due to local political atmosphere, budget restraints, schedule, local priorities, and either a lack of urgency or too avid a constituency of wood burners in the area. I plan to update with these towns when local regulations pass in other towns to encourage them to reconsider and act.
3. One town -- Franklin's Director of Health has refuted information about the harms of wood smoke and OWFS. This was reported to the CT DPH. Outreach was made to town officials through email in September without his support.

Despite these negatives, most health officials are positive and supportive of our project and are willing to advise local leaders on the information I share. Directors of Health often wish to participate only upon the request of their local leaders in order to maintain good local relationship within their districts.

Additional Work in Progress

1. We have helped residents who have been exposed to neighbors' wood smoke. In one case, we brought a resident to a meeting with their local Director of Health.
2. Two instances of outreach have been out of state – Wales and Alaska. In Wales, the resident has shared EHHI information about wood smoke and OWFs locally and throughout the European Union.
3. Other outreach has included a direct supply of information about Indiana's incentive program to exchange OWFS for solar/geothermal energy systems (It's Doable Go Renewable) with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) and the Managing Director, Residential Programs at Connecticut Green Bank.
4. We have established positive contact with the CT DEEP and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH). In a recent meeting with the CT DPH, I encouraged collaboration between these two agencies to enact "No Burn Days" on summer days when the Air Quality Index (AQI) is unhealthy. While the CT DPH was receptive to this idea, CT DEEP has responded, "they do not intend to pursue a burn ban at this point in time." However, CT DEEP has agreed to include recommendations to refrain from recreational wood burning in future news releases on air quality forecasts.

Submitted on September 9, 2016 by Tricia Taylor, Project Director and Deputy Outreach Director for Environment and Human Health, Inc.