



News from

Office of the Attorney General
55 Elm Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Attorney General

Richard Blumenthal

For
Immediate
Release

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2009

ATTORNEY GENERAL, HEALTH ADVOCATES CALL FOR STATEWIDE BAN ON OUTDOOR WOOD FURNANCES

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal today called on the General Assembly to ban outdoor wood-burning furnaces, which continuously emit toxic smoke that sickens neighbors and pollutes neighborhoods.

The American Lung Association and Environment and Human Health, Inc. (EHHI), a nonprofit health advocacy group, joined Blumenthal in urging the legislature to impose a statewide prohibition on the furnaces.

Three Connecticut towns -- Granby, Hebron and Tolland -- have already banned outdoor wood-burning furnaces. Washington state also prohibits the devices.

Blumenthal said, "Outdoor wood-burning furnaces spew toxic smoke 24 hours a day, seven days a week, sickening neighbors and contaminating neighborhoods. A ban is necessary unless and until these furnaces are completely redesigned -- to stop their toxic impacts. Outdoor wood furnaces emit the same toxins and carcinogens as cigarettes. The smoke particles are so fine that they infest even the tightest houses and strongest lungs, contaminating bodies and homes.

"These furnaces are a major and malignant menace, causing whole neighborhoods not only sore eyes and throats, but serious chronic respiratory illnesses like bronchitis and pneumonia. They burn wood at relatively low temperature, emit huge smoke amounts close to the ground and send millions of small soot particles into the air. They have met no federal standards for safety and health.

"Complaints have dramatically proliferated as these furnaces become more prevalent -- more homeowners burning wood in outdoor furnaces to avoid higher cost oil or natural gas in tough economic times. Homeowners have no right to pollute their neighborhoods -- raising risks of serious disease requiring inhalers and steroids and other common medical treatment.

"These outdoor wood-burning furnaces are drastically different from indoor woods stoves, which are certified under federal standards and therefore

Contact: Christopher Hoffman or Tara Downes

860-808-5324

should not be banned. A statewide ban on outdoor wood-burning furnaces will spare our state this threat to human health and the environment,” Blumenthal said.

EHHI President Nancy Alderman said, “Without a complete ban of these devices, there is really no way to protect the health of citizens in the state. Wood smoke has some of the same components as cigarette smoke, and therefore breathing wood smoke in 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is incredibly dangerous. “

*****END*****

Contact:

Christopher Hoffman or Tara Downes

860-808-5324