

From: Larry Weinberger [lweinberger@blackfoot.net]

Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2009 6:53 AM

To: jcurtiss@co.missoula.mt.us; mlandquist@co.missoula.mt.us; Benjamin Schmidt; Mamie Colburn; Ellen Leahy; bcarey@co.missoula.mt.us; Jim Carlson; Shannon Therriault; Greg Oliver

Subject: Proposed New Woodstove Regulations

To Whom It May Concern,

I live in rural Missoula County, in Potomac, and I am absolutely opposed to the proposed new regulations for woodstoves in Missoula County. If the proposed regulations are enacted, they will not have the desired effect because they ignore a number of important factors. Furthermore, the proposed regulations will allow the wants of some to outweigh the needs of many.

As a rural resident, my needs are different than the needs of the residents of the City of Missoula. Nearly every home in Potomac Valley is in or near the forest. So, one of our primary needs is to protect our homes from the potential threat of forest fires. This is accomplished by: 1) providing a defensible space around our homes by removing the trees that are too close; 2) thinning the trees in the surrounding areas to keep them healthier and reduce the concentrations of fuel; 3) removing dead trees, which burn more easily than live trees; 4) removing trees killed by pine beetles, to reduce the spread of pine beetles, thus reducing the number of dying trees. As a result of these actions, we end up with fuel that must be destroyed somehow.

Environmentally, and financially, it makes the most sense to use this fuel for heating our homes. Nearly all of the heat in my home comes from wood, and all of that wood comes from my 20 acre parcel. In fact, I have more than I can use. Anything that's left over must be given away or piled up and burned. If you enact the proposed new regulations, you aren't going to reduce the amount of fuel I have to dispose of. Instead, you're going to force me to burn more of it in big, smoldering piles. This will put far more particulate in the air than burning the same amount of wood in a woodstove at a high, even temperature. So not only would the proposed regulations waste the heat that could be provided by a free, renewable, domestic resource, they would also increase our dependence on foreign resources, while actually having a negative impact on the overall air quality.

And please don't ignore the additional financial burden it will put on me. I am a working class taxpayer. I don't have a lot of disposable income, and I can't afford to replace my wood heat with heat from exorbitantly priced utilities.

I can appreciate the desire of the residents of the City of Missoula to have cleaner air. And I think it makes sense to limit burning in the city. After all, there are more people than trees in the City of Missoula, so you don't have the same needs that we have in rural Missoula County. So I understand their wants, but that doesn't change our needs. And I certainly don't think their wants should outweigh our needs. And for the reasons I've outlined above, I'm very confident that the proposed regulations will not have the desired effect anyway, so they just don't make any sense to me.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Larry Weinberger

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