

OHPBA Statements, DEQ Woodstove Working Group

June 4, 2016

Background:

The 2015 Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3068, directing the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to conduct a study and develop recommendations for legislation to reduce woodstove smoke in Oregon. Oregon DEQ has convened a Woodsmoke Workgroup to provide input, develop ideas and assist DEQ in its report to the Legislature, due in September 2016. Throughout this process, OHPBA has been at the table attending the meetings that have been held about every other month since December, 2015. Harvey Gail, John Crouch, Tim Reed and Bob Sourek of Bear Mountain Forest products have been in attendance at these meetings. We have had input in many areas. While we can't be assured that everything that comes out of the work group will be to our complete satisfaction, OHPBA recognizes this is a collaborative process and must reflect diverse interests.

Reducing wood smoke, particularly in communities where attainment of national air quality standards is a concern:

***OHPBA position:** OHPBA supports the efforts of local communities, counties and air quality organizations. Through our network of retailers and our trade association, OHPBA will provide input, ideas, and take part in community education campaigns to educate homeowners on the proper way to use wood stoves, store and cure cord wood, and maintain their stoves and chimneys.*

Exploring options for transitioning from older, high-polluting woodstoves to cleaner-burning home heating alternatives including non-wood heating systems

***OHPBA position:** OHPBA supports efforts to give homeowners options. However, we feel modern, certified wood stoves should always be allowed as an option for people, as well as pellet stoves and gas appliances. OHPBA feels burning wood responsibly is a cultural legacy on our state. We feel Oregonians have a right to burn wood as this fuel source is plentiful and renewable, but it must be done responsibly. Also, cost is often a factor in a homeowner's reluctance to switch from cord wood to other fuels. In efforts to keep costs low, homeowners often receive their cord wood from family members, neighbors, and through bartered agreements. Use of cord wood builds community and family ties. Also, OHPBA recommends that the Residential Energy Tax Credit program should be continued and that Oregon's Heat Smart Law be expanded to include rental properties.*

Exploring options for reducing the cost of using woodstove alternatives for home heating during poor air quality days

***OHPBA position:** OHPBA agrees major main reason costs are high is poorly weatherized homes are harder to heat and often other fuels don't heat the home enough. Weatherization upgrades should be provided affordably to homeowners switching from cord wood to pellet, gas or electric heat.*

Directing DEQ to examine the use and production of residential biomass fuel

***OHPBA position:** OHPBA recognizes that this statement is intended to refer to biomass fuel that has been further processed to be cleaner burning and convenient. Pellet fuel, bio bricks, and kiln dried cord wood fall under this definition. Oregon is rich in these resources and OHPBA believes Oregon must embrace renewable biomass energy in order to meet its aggressive Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard. Electricity isn't the only form of energy."*

Biomass heat is “energy” too. By including co-gen electric power using biomass fuels and wood/pellet heat in residences in the standard, Oregon will have an easier time meeting the requirement that 50% of Oregon’s energy (electricity) is from renewable sources by the year 2040. Also, by producing biomass locally, many communities may be able to create sustainable economic opportunities and reduce emissions through use of biomass fuels at the same time. Simple programs, like cord wood storage programs that allow homeowners to switch their unseasoned wood for seasoned wood stored and maintained by local community organizations. Communities could also harvest tops and limbs of forest harvest operations and trees damaged by fire to reduce the need for “slash burning” and create economic opportunities locally.