



2009-03-09
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Objet : règlement relatif aux combustibles solides

Re: Public Consultations on the Bylaw banning new wood-burning appliances:

I'm writing to support the city of Montreal's proposed by-law banning the installation of new wood-burning stoves. I'd also like to urge the city to include a ban on commercial wood-burning enterprises in the pending regulations.

I live in Mile End where my family, my neighbours and I are concerned about living next to several wood-burning bagel bakeries. The bakery ovens burn wood 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In an interview in *Le Journal de Montreal* on February 24, 2009, Louis P. Brisson of the Quebec Lung Association compares the emissions from one bagel bakery oven to the equivalent of 8,700 cars running non-stop (Polluants, les bagels? <http://www2.canoe.com/infos/environnement/archives/2009/02/20090224-100900.html>)

We have to endure the smell of burning wood and we inhale smoke which is a serious health hazard. (Les poêles à bois plus polluants que les autos, *La Presse*, 27 January, 2009).

Wood smoke pollution particles are so small that they filter into our homes even with all the doors and windows closed. The level of indoor air pollution is typically equal to 70% of the outdoor pollution level. (The Health Effects of Wood Smoke, Washington State Department of Ecology, Burning Issues Wood Smoke Fact Sheet, <http://burningissues.org>)

The smoke produced by the wood as it burns contains about 100 different toxic substances, including several known carcinogens. More than 95% of these are fine particles, so tiny that they penetrate deep into lung tissue. (Public Health Montreal, www.santepub-mtl.qc.ca.)

In addition there are volatile organic compounds that usually have no color, taste or smell. Some cause direct health effects, while others contribute to smog, while polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are a health concern because of their potential to cause cancer (Health Canada,

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/environ/wood-bois_e.html). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the lifetime cancer risk from wood stove smoke is twelve times greater than that from an equal volume of second hand tobacco smoke (The Health Effects of Wood Smoke, Washington State Department of Ecology, Burning Issues Wood Smoke Fact Sheet, <http://burningissues.org>).

Another matter of concern is the dispersion of soot when the chimneys are cleaned. When the bagel bakery chimney is cleaned, soot covers our stairs, yards, patios, balconies, the laundry on the line, and, if a door or window is open, our floors and walls.

On a more general level, we are concerned about the wood smoke from the bagel bakery and its overall effect on the urban smog problem. Typically the bagel factories burn 2-3 cords of wood a week. Burning two cords of wood produces the same amount of mutagenic particles (particles that may cause cells to change) as driving 13 gasoline powered cars 10,000 miles each at 20 miles per gallon (Dr. Joellen Lewtas, Contribution of Source Emissions of the Mutagenicity of Ambient Urban Air Particles, U.S. EPA, #91-131.6, 1991, Burning Issues Wood Smoke Fact Sheet, January 2003, <http://burningissues.org>).

We realize that the bagel bakeries are part of the heritage and the character of Mile End. We hope that a way can be found to reduce the toxicity and nuisance of burning wood. Ultimately, if the wood smoke emissions can't be reduced to safe and environmentally sound levels other measures may have to be considered such as switching to a cleaner source of heat, like natural gas.

We hope that the city of Montreal will take the environmental lead when it comes to dealing with polluting wood smoke -- both commercial and residential.

Sarah Gilbert