



March 15, 2011

RE: Comment / Testimony in Support of HB829 – Renewable Energy for All Act

To: House Economic Matters Committee – Chairman Dereck E. Davis and Vice Chairman David D. Rudolph

Courtland Hearth & Hardware, Inc. operates 4 (four) Retail stores located in Harford and Baltimore County, Maryland. Our company is a family owned business that planted its roots next to the Courthouse in Bel Air, MD in 1893. Five families and four generations later we now employ 66 (sixty-six) employees. Through our century of evolution, Courtland has always sold the latest in wood heating appliances to homeowners of all income levels.

Courtland began selling biomass / pellet heating appliances in 1988. The biomass / pellet appliance and the pellet fuel business have evolved into the most important category / department in our entire corporation.

In 2010, our company sold over 700 (seven hundred) pellet appliances and 8,946 (eight thousand nine hundred and forty-six) tons of pellet fuel. One ton of wood pellets has the energy equivalency of 2.8 Barrels of #2 fuel oil (Energy Information Administration). Our small family business reduced our Nations dependency on foreign oil by 25,048 (twenty-five thousand and forty-eight) Barrels in 2010. Our average customer using pellets to heat their home uses three tons of wood pellets per heating season at a cost of about \$660 (six hundred and sixty dollars). The cost of heating oil for the equivalent BTU production would be \$1204 (one thousand two hundred and four dollars).

Direct thermal conversion of pellets has an efficiency of approximately 80% (eighty percent) with a carbon neutral footprint. Every ton of wood pellets burned in an efficient wood pellet appliance reduced carbon emissions over the comparable BTU production from fossil fuels.

How wonderful would it be to sell fuel that produced lower emissions than oil and that was grown in Maryland? Wood Pellet Manufacturers take wood by-products and process them into wood pellets that are uniform in size, shape, moisture, density and energy content. Not only can Maryland provide the feed stock to make premium heating fuel pellets, Marylanders can burn them to provide efficient heat for homeowners of all income levels.

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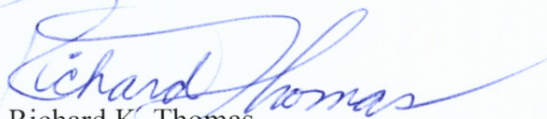
A homeowner could spend as little as \$5000 (five thousand dollars), to have a compliant pellet appliance professionally installed that would heat a 2000 (two thousand) square foot dwelling. This amount is very reasonable in comparison to what it would cost to install a solar, wind or geothermal system.

Speaking directly to tax credits, with the Federal tax credit of up to \$1500 (one thousand five hundred dollars) expiring December 31, 2010, customers had a huge incentive to make a purchase. Our sales in December 2010 were nearly double December 2009. The tax incentive worked!

Increased Sales = Increased Job Numbers.

Courtland Hearth & Hardware, Inc. strongly supports Act HB829

Sincerely,



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Attachment Enclosed