

October 3, 1983

THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL
795 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02139

Subject: Ionization Smoke Detectors

Dear Honorable City Council,

I am writing to express my anger at the laws you have passed forbidding anyone to remove smoke detectors.

I agree with the ordinances requiring landlords to install fire detectors on their rental properties, but I'm particularly concerned about the number of landlords and private homeowners, installing the ionization smoke detectors which contain radioactive material protected only by a piece of foil. I read that these detectors should be returned to the manufacturer when they become obsolete or defective. How many people (including landlords) are aware of this? On asking my roommate what his method of disposal would be, he replied, "In the garbage." Seriously, how many people do you think are going to bother returning them to the manufacturer? Over the years Cambridge City dump will become a collection ground for all that radioactivity gathered into one spot, possibly giving out lung cancer, bone cancer and leukemia to anybody involved with it not to mention the effect on the surrounding environment. Do you want our city dump to be turned into a hazardous waste site? I agree that fire alarms save many lives each year, but we'd be building a big time bomb at our city dump. Don't you think we are putting enough hazardous waste into our environment daily without adding this to it? There are alternative types of fire alarms on the market, but most people it seems, opt to install the radioactive kind. If the photo-electric type are not efficient enough then it should be made a challenge to our technology and industry to come up with alternatives that do not contain radioactive material.

Sincerely,

Dorothy M. Bailey

P.S. At a recent flea-market my roommate saw a man selling fire detector parts. In one big box all together the man had a pile of the small square foils containing radioactive material. I imagine this presented a hazard alone, just being there. Anyhow what's to prevent some curious youngster collecting or dismantling discarded detectors in the same way?

20 Dudley St.
Cambridge, Mass. 02140

8.

S-565

Comm. from Dorothy M. Bailey, 20 Dudley St.,
in opposition to laws which forbid the re-
moval of ionization smoke detectors, which
contain radioactive materials from buildings.

In City Council,

October 17, 1983

10/17/83

Referred to the
City Manager

copy sent to the City Manager
10/19/83 mhr