

Beware the Illegal Clothesline

The other day I was skimming through [Facebook](#) and saw an [article about a bill](#) being passed to allow people to dry their clothes on a line outside. I was floored. "Is this for real?" I asked myself. As usual, I went into research mode and was shocked to find that there are numerous places all across the country where drying your clothing outside in the sunshine is illegal. Beware! The Illegal Clothesline!



I couldn't believe it. This is right up there with it being [illegal to catch rainwater](#) in certain states. The concept is ludicrous to me and I struggled to see the issue from the other side. What is so horrific about drying clothes in the sunshine? Is the line going to suddenly spring free and strangle someone? Will wearing clothes dried by the sun turn you into a diabolical villain? Sure, I could understand how it might be less than pleasant to see your neighbor's boxers on the line but we all wear underclothes so what's the big deal?

I decided to delve deeper into this and learned that there are now “right to dry” states, along with the bans.

What I learned was that the bans are mostly in HOAs (Home Owner Associations) and the reasons cited for the rules are because it is “unsightly, pose a strangulation threat, and lower property values.” Some lump line drying clothes in with rules that also pertain to ‘trash, junk, and litter,” therefore it is against their rules to dry a blanket or pair of jeans over the railing of your porch, let alone a proper drying set up. Beware, the illegal clothesline enforcers come and common sense is tossed out the door!

Thankfully, at least [19 states](#) have put laws on the books that override silly HOA rules like these. Yes, I called them silly. It is ridiculous to me that people would actively object to clothing drying on the line. Especially...*especially* when the big draw and mission statement for the HOA is that they are ‘green.’ They make sure people recycle, provide ‘natural trails’ for people to walk on, maybe have a nice little ‘natural pond’ and encourage people to be active in all things ‘green,’ yet fail to allow people to dry clothes using the sun’s power. Others that tout their green superiority ‘allow’ clotheslines so long as they are not visible from...well anywhere. They have to be effectively boxed in so they don’t offend anyone’s view.

In my research (sources listed below), I found something that gave me hope. Back in 1978, the [Solar Rights Act](#) was put into place regarding using the sun and solar power, specifically barring HOAs from doing what they are doing now. Solar access law is something that is not common knowledge to the average American. The fact that you are using the sun’s warmth to dry the clothing by effectively trapping it inside the fibers could technically fall under the laws that govern the “ability to harness the sun’s power” and override HOA rules.

Consider one of these line drying set ups that can easily be taken down if needed!

I also came across a one hour movie called "[Drying for Freedom](#)" that looks to be a real eye opener about the energy cost savings our country would enjoy, let alone the impact it would have on the environment from a lack of burning coal and fossil fuels to produce the electricity it takes to dry clothing. Though I was unable to find it for free, it's just a [\\$1.99 to rent on Amazon](#). It is also on Vimeo according to the site.

I also came across some old footage about Americans being sold the 'electric dream,' as was also mentioned in the trailer for the movie. It intrigued me and I went digging further. Ronald and Nancy Reagan were part of [General Electric Theatre](#) which made sure the media was used to their advantage. It also made ol' Ronnie quite wealthy. That did help to answer some of the questions I had – "When was the turning point? What made drying your clothes outside in the sunshine filled breeze so deplorable to the point of actual scorn?"

To me, the question of being able to dry your clothes is on par with whether or not you can breathe air. The more we are getting into this homesteading gig, the more I am learning that all the things I want to do, things that were once considered normal behavior, is under fire and there are people actively trying to make it illegal to do just about anything that could be considered self reliant. From [growing your own food](#), to [catching rainwater](#), to being prepared for a natural or man made disaster, it is all coming under fire. I can't stop myself from [questioning everything](#) about how things work now.

I know I am not the only one! Chime in below with your thoughts, suggestions, and opinions! We love to hear from you!

Sources

- [Clothesline Bans in 19 States Void](#)
- [Solar Rights Act](#)
- [Hung Out to Dry: Why Clothesline Bans are Wrongheaded](#)
- [Is Your Clothesline Illegal?](#)