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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stage 2 Burn Ban Now in Effect for Clark County

The use of all fireplaces, inserts wood stoves and pellet stoves is prohibited until air quality improves.

Households without an alternative source of heat are exempt.

VANCOUVER, Wash. –Due to persistent unhealthy levels of air pollution in Clark County, the Southwest Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) is issuing a Stage 2 Burn Ban effective immediately throughout Clark County. The use of all fireplaces, pellet stoves, wood stoves and inserts is prohibited until air quality improves and the Stage 2 Burn Ban is lifted. If wood burning is your sole source of heat, you are exempt from this curtailment and we ask that you burn as clean as possible. All outdoor burning is also prohibited during this Stage 2 Burn Ban.

“We have already exceeded the federal health-based standard for fine particulate matter pollution and are hoping this Stage 2 Burn Ban will keep our air quality from getting even worse,” said Randy Peltier, operations manager for the agency. “We are not asking anyone to go without heat, but to use an alternative source of heat if possible until weather patterns change and our air quality returns to healthy levels.”

“There is a clear pattern of particulate pollutants rising quickly as people get home from work and start up their wood stoves. If stoves are dampered down to ‘hold’ the fire overnight, the problem is compounded,” said Jackie Brown, air quality specialist at SWCAA. “This occurs at the same time overnight inversions are occurring. The cumulative effect of each individual’s wood stove use during these cold stagnant periods causes pollution levels to rise to unhealthy levels, even impacting those who do not already have

respiratory problems.”

Fine particulate matter pollution in smoke released from wood stoves, fireplaces and other wood burning are of concern because they can reach deep into the lungs. Episodes of high fine particle pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing and make lung and heart problems worse. Air pollution is especially harmful to people with heart and lung problems, children, and adults over 65.

This countywide Stage 2 Burn Ban will remain in effect until our monitors show demonstrated improvement in our air quality and weather forecasts indicate improved ventilation. To sign up to receive e-mail notifications of these burn bans or for clean burning techniques, visit www.swcleanair.org.

Tips for Cleaner Burning:

The most complete and effective way to reduce wood smoke pollution is to use another form of heat. If you must use wood, or choose to do so when local rules permit, the following recommendations can help diminish the emissions from your wood stove, fireplace or fireplace insert:

- Only burn dry, seasoned wood. Be sure your firewood has been split and dried for at least one year.
- Never burn wet, painted, stained or treated wood, color newsprint, plastic, garbage, diapers or magazines. Items such as these produce high amounts of odor, smoke and toxic fumes. Burning these materials is illegal and also an excellent way to start a chimney fire.
- Store your firewood under cover. A shed or shelter is best. If you use a plastic tarp, allow ventilation to prevent condensation.
- Burn small, hot fires. This helps the wood burn completely and cleanly.
- Never allow the fire to smolder. Smoldering fires are the worst polluters because they burn at a temperature too low for efficient combustion. The result is more smoke—unburned wood going up the chimney, wasted.
- Do not damper too much. Allow enough air for the wood to burn fully, without smoldering. Never try to keep the fire going overnight by cutting back the air supply. This wastes wood, produces much smoke and creosote and produces little heat.
- Step outside and look at the plume from your chimney. You should see only heat waves. If you can see smoke, your wood is not burning completely. Increase the air supply to your fire.
- Size your wood stove properly. A stove that is too large for the space to be heated will have to be damped down, causing much smoke and wasting wood.

- Do not burn in moderate temperatures. Your stove will tend to overheat your house. You will want to close the dampers to cut back on the heat, which cuts oxygen to the fire, wastes wood and increases pollution.
- Don't install a wood stove until you have considered other ways to cut heating costs. Insulating and weather stripping can cost less than a stove and will reduce your heating requirements, whether your heat sources is wood, oil, gas or electricity.
- Don't install an uncertified stove—installation of uncertified stoves is illegal. These stoves are more polluting.

Founded in 1968, the mission of the Southwest Clean Air Agency is to preserve and enhance the air quality in southwest Washington. Serving the counties of Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum, SWCAA is responsible for protecting the public's health through the enforcement of federal, state and local air quality standards and regulations.

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