

Butte County Air Quality Management District Plan for Smoke Reduction from Residential Wood Burning

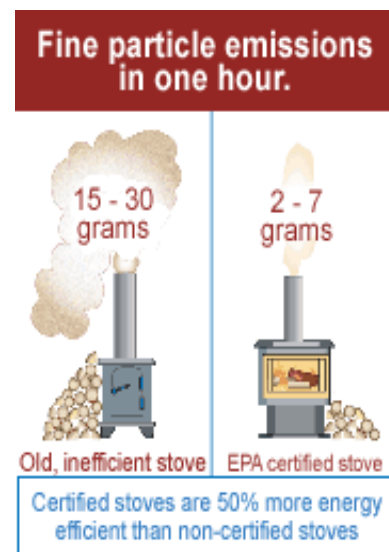
What is this about? Many areas in Butte County have high levels of smoke during cold weather due to residential wood burning devices such as wood stoves and fireplaces. Butte County currently exceeds the state air standards for particulate matter and Chico exceeds the federal fine particulate matter standard. Wood smoke contributes significantly to this problem. In response, the Butte County Air Quality Management District has been reviewing possible solutions and seeks public feedback and ideas.

Why is this necessary? The residents of Butte County want healthful air, and must have the ability to heat their homes. The District is dedicated to finding solutions to balance these interests so that our communities can meet the state and federal health-based air standards.

What is not being considered? A ban on wood stoves is NOT being considered, nor is prohibiting the use of wood stoves on poor air quality days if wood heat is the sole source of home heating.

What is being considered? Informing the public of the dangers of poor air quality, and the variety of ways to reduce or avoid it is an ongoing mission of the District. Improving and expanding this outreach process is our highest priority.

The voluntary Wood Stove Replacement “rebate” program (replacing an old wood stove that burns inefficiently with a new EPA certified stove can reduce smoke impacts significantly) has been popular in Butte County and the District is looking at ways to expand this program.





The District requests the public to voluntarily “*Don’t Light Tonight*” on poor air quality days. A mandatory directive to refrain from using wood burning devices on those few poor air quality days is being discussed for areas with the highest known impacts.

Limiting the number of wood burning devices inside new homes and, outdoor devices (such as patio hearths or outdoor kitchens), and/or requiring the replacement or removal of old uncertified devices when a home remodel is done or a home is sold are all possible measures that have been discussed.

What’s happening? District staff has held several public meetings to discuss the proposed solutions to the poor air quality and to ask for feedback from Butte County residents and businesses. No decisions will be made until all comments and suggestions have been evaluated and approved by the Governing Board. District staff will be providing an updated report to the District’s Governing Board at the March 27, 2008 meeting recommending more public outreach and topics to be covered. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:00 am and will be held at the City of Chico Council Chambers, 421 Main Street, Chico.

How can I get more information? Contact the District office at 891-2882 (or toll-free (888) 891-2882), or online at www.bcaqmd.org , click on [Wood Stoves and Fireplaces – New](#).

What about open burning? Open burning of yard wastes such as leaves and prunings and agricultural wastes fall under different regulations. District staff recently began working with local fire agencies to develop a one-stop permitting program. This is being done, in part, due to a request from the Paradise/Upper Ridge Ad Hoc Committee to develop a more effective smoke management program for the Magalia/Upper Ridge area, similar to the Town of Paradise burn program. More information, on open burning developments will be available at a later date.