

# Better Air in Tacoma and Pierce County

## Recommendations of the Clean Air Task Force

The Tacoma-Pierce County Clean Air Task Force recommends three main strategies to reduce fine particle pollution and bring the region into attainment of federal air quality standards. The recommendations represent the culmination of seven months of review and analysis by the Task Force, a diverse cross-section of community leaders representing Pierce County residents – including those who heat their homes with wood, business, government and health – who volunteered their time and input to explore meaningful, yet achievable ways for Pierce County to improve its air quality.

### What is the Clean Air Task Force recommending to improve air quality?

The Task Force explored over 60 possible tactics for reducing fine particle pollution from wood-burning, transportation and goods movement activities. With technical guidance provided by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency staff to assess the feasibility, cost, and potential air quality benefits, the Task Force honed in on three primary strategies. Because fine particle pollution comes from a variety of sources, these strategies target multiple sectors, including wood smoke from residential home heating, and emissions from transportation and industrial sources.

The following overarching principles were adopted by the Task Force in developing their recommendations:

- All residents and communities in the nonattainment area should contribute to the solution.
- The solutions should be implemented in a manner that will provide some form of assistance to low- and fixed-income residents or helping them find alternatives.
- Education efforts are a key component to ensure effective implementation.

#### **Recommended Solution 1:** **Enhance Enforcement of Air Quality Burn Bans**

**Goal:** *Ensure that those who are contributing the most to the fine particle pollution during periods of the poorest air quality reduce their emissions.*

Under Washington State law, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency can temporarily ban the use of wood-burning heating devices when air pollution reaches, or is expected to reach, unhealthy levels. To improve the effectiveness of air quality burn bans, the Task Force recommends:

- Expanded education and outreach. The Task Force agreed that community education about burn bans

and the importance of complying is essential to success.

- Increased enforcement of burn bans. This includes leveraging part-time personnel to enforce burn bans, exploring technologies to improve evening enforcement of burn bans, and adjusting the criteria for when burn bans are called to more effectively protect health.

#### **Recommended Solution 2:** **Require the Removal of Uncertified Wood Stoves and Inserts by a Certain Date**

**Goal:** *Removal of the older, more polluting wood stoves and inserts from the nonattainment area.*

Wood stoves and inserts manufactured prior to 1988 produce more pollution and are less efficient than more modern devices. These stoves and inserts are called uncertified devices; there are approximately 24,000 of these old, high-polluting, uncertified devices in the nonattainment area. Removing these devices would effectively reduce fine particle pollution in the long run. Thus, the Task Force recommends establishing a clear date by which time all residents will need to remove their uncertified wood stove or insert. They propose the end of August 2015. To date, more than 1,200 of these devices have been removed and replaced under a prior voluntary Clean Air Agency program.

#### **Recommended Solution 3:** **Reduce Pollution from Gasoline Vehicles, Diesel Vehicles, Industries, Ships**

The Task Force recommends continued implementation of rules and support for programs and initiatives that target pollution reductions from transportation and industrial sources. Approximately one-quarter to one-third of the emission reductions needed will be accomplished from new federal regulations and local initiatives for more efficient engines, cleaner fuels, and improved industrial practices.

## What's next?

The Clean Air Agency's board of directors will review and discuss the Task Force's report and recommendations at its January 26, 2012 meeting. Pierce County residents are welcome to provide input as well. This will build on input already received and weighed by the Task Force.

### To share feedback, residents can:

- *Attend the January 26 board meeting.*  
A briefing and discussion about the nonattainment recommendations will begin at 9:15 a.m.  
Location:  
Bates Technical College, Auditorium  
1101 South Yakima Ave, downtown Tacoma;
- *Submit feedback online* at [www.cleanairpiercecouny.org](http://www.cleanairpiercecouny.org); or
- *Mail your feedback to :*  
Nonattainment Recommendations  
Puget Sound Clean Air Agency  
1904 Third Ave., Suite 105  
Seattle, WA 98101

**Please provide written feedback by February 10, 2012.**

The board will consider the public's previous and ongoing input as it reviews the strategies, and will provide Agency staff its recommendations for moving forward. The Clean Air Agency will submit its recommendations to the Washington State Department of Ecology which will use these recommendations to finalize its plan required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Ecology will conduct a formal comment process in Fall 2012.

Local government, business leaders and the community will have continued opportunities to help shape the implementation of the eventual strategies.

Learn more and sign up for updates at [www.cleanairpiercecouny.org](http://www.cleanairpiercecouny.org).

### *Sources of wintertime fine particle pollution in South End Tacoma/ Pierce County*

