



SUMMIT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 31, 2018
TO: Summit County Council
FROM: Phil Bondurant- Director of Environmental Health
RE: Local Partnership receives \$120,000 for wood burning fireplace exchange program in Summit County

On October 10, 2018, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it awarded \$120,000 for a local partnership to improve air quality in Summit County, Utah, an area that is prone to winter inversions and spikes in Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 concentrations. The project includes a voluntary fireplace exchange program for low and moderate-income residents and an educational and awareness campaign for underserved populations to address the health effects of wood smoke. Project partners include the Summit County Health Department, Habitat for Humanity of Summit & Wasatch Counties, and PurpleAir.

The Utah award is among \$1.2 million in cooperative agreements awarded to ten organizations working to address environmental justice (EJ) issues in their communities. Projects selected this year reflect an emphasis on support for rural communities and watershed protection. The funding is provided through EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) program, which supports local organizations in their efforts to develop and implement community-driven solutions that address environmental and public health disparities in minority, low-income, tribal and indigenous populations. Special consideration this year was given to projects located in rural areas, with the goal of increasing outreach and community capacity building in areas where such resources can be particularly scarce. In the end, ten community projects were selected from 72 applications.

Although air quality in Summit County is far below the EPA established Air Quality Index for PM 2.5, we must continue to identify ways to maintain and improve our current air quality. Wood burning fireplaces are the top producers of PM 2.5 (see attachment 1), therefore efforts to reduce the health and environmental impacts are a worthwhile cause at all levels of local government. This program builds on existing regulation by engaging the community through education and a voluntary call to action to retrofit wood burning fireplaces.

Burn Smart Summit County is another step towards reducing the negative impacts of wood smoke in our area. By engaging the community, the Burn Smart Summit County program hopes to create social change around wood smoke and the use of wood burning fireplaces. Not only does this program assist those who personally benefit from a conversion to natural gas, it also helps preserve air quality in our community for the foreseeable future.

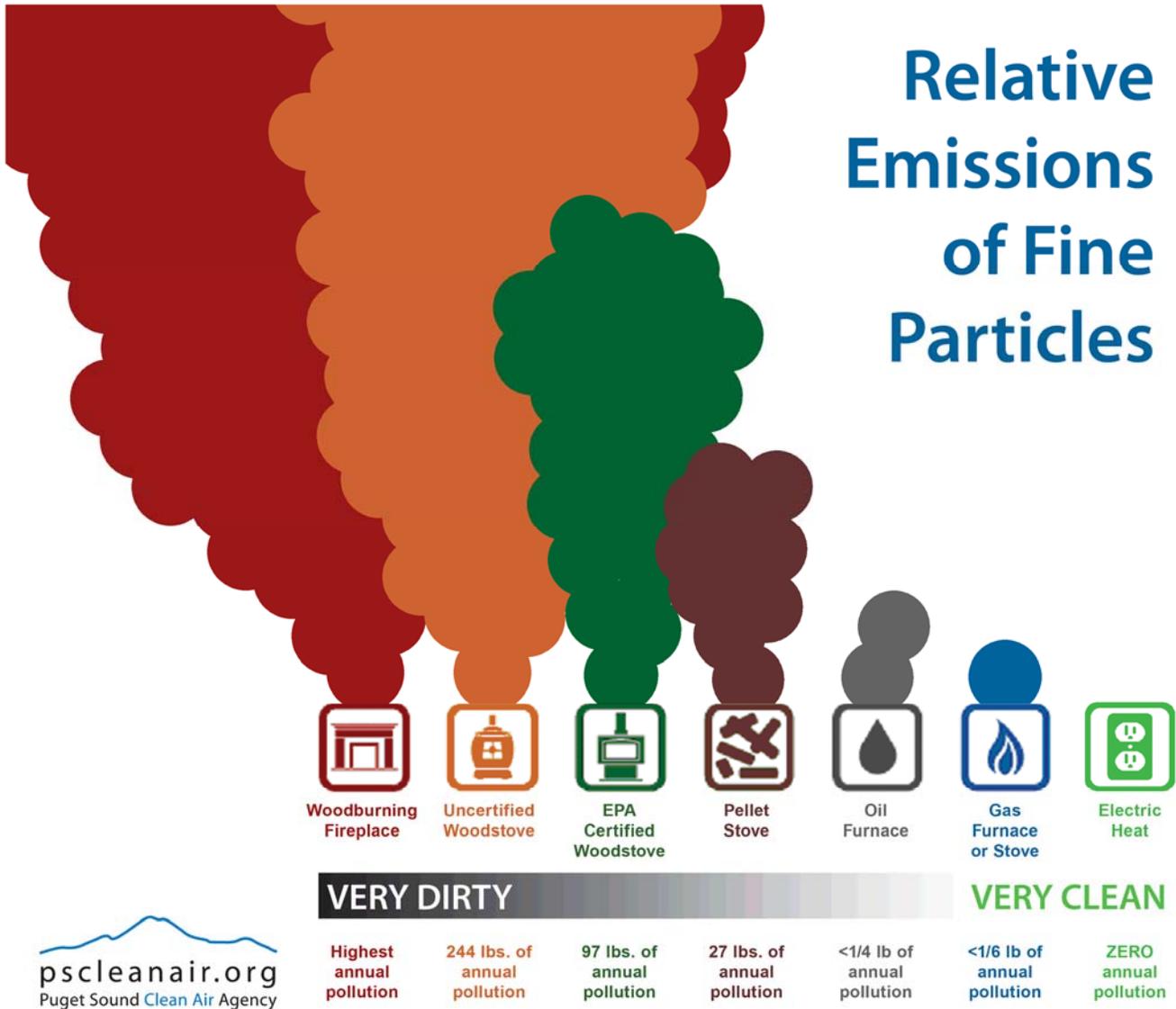
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Attachment 1:



pscleanair.org
Puget Sound Clean Air Agency

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