

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-010

Affirming Multnomah County's Commitment to Clean Air.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. Wood smoke is harmful to human health and accounts for a significant portion of fine particle pollution (PM 2.5) in Multnomah County. Wood smoke is a complex mixture of gasses, vapors and particles that are known to cause heart and lung disease, breathing problems, cancer, irritation, and a number of other negative effects, and is linked to seven of the 10 leading causes of death in Multnomah County.
- b. Residential wood combustion is the primary source of human caused particulate matter in Multnomah County. In addition to residential wood combustion (including pellets) from wood stoves and fireplaces inventoried by the state Department of Environmental Quality, Multnomah County residents also have to contend with other human caused sources of wood burning pollution including; commercial kitchen cooking and ambiance, outdoor recreational fires such as fire pits and chimineas, and brush pile burning.
- c. In Multnomah County, residential wood combustion is the leading source of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), a group of hazardous air pollutants, accounting for 74% of all sources in the Portland metro region.
- d. Wood smoke accounts for 11% of cancer risk from air toxics in Multnomah County.
- e. Reducing PM 2.5 by 5% would prevent 13 deaths annually in Multnomah County; reducing it by 25% would prevent 63 deaths annually.
- f. We cannot choose the air we breathe. Children, aging adults, and those with existing cardiovascular, respiratory or other chronic illness are most sensitive and vulnerable to the effects of wood smoke. It is in the interest of public health to develop strategies to reduce the impact of wood smoke on communities.
- g. In Resolution No. 2018-108 the Board of County Commissioners affirmed the County's commitment to the principles of environmental justice.
- h. In Resolution No. 2021-017 the Board of County Commissioners declared racism a public health crisis and named racism as a root cause of health inequities impacting the life course of Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color ("BIPOC"), including Latinx, Pacific Islanders, and Asians, as well as immigrants and refugees of color, and negatively impacting all people living in the United States. The Resolution also declared that it is Multnomah County's goal to eventually eliminate health inequities and to continue to lead with race in order to ensure the County's efforts address the root causes of health inequities.

- i. Disproportionate exposure to air pollution is part of the public health crisis of racism, contributing to large racial disparities in illness and premature death. Nationally, according to EPA’s National Center for Environmental Assessment, Black Americans are exposed to 1.54 times more PM 2.5, those in poverty had 1.35 times higher burden, and non-Whites had 1.28 times higher burden than did the overall population.
- j. Chronic exposure to PM 2.5 has also increased the mortality and morbidity of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Exposure to PM 2.5 has been shown to be predictive of COVID-19 mortality, with a one microgram increase in PM 2.5 associated with an 8% increase in the COVID-19 death rate.
- k. Burning wood is harmful for the climate, releasing stored carbon dioxide in one quick burst, in addition to releases of methane, nitrous oxide and black carbon (or soot), all of which have potent short-term warming impact.
- l. Burning wood is inconsistent with the vision of clean air and a healthy climate, and to achieve this vision all sources of human caused combustion will need to be eliminated.
- m. Multnomah County is the Local Public Health Authority. A core responsibility of the Local Public Health Authority is to adopt ordinances necessary to administer any public health matter not expressly preempted by Oregon law.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

1. The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners believes that all people who live, work, or visit Multnomah County should be able to breathe clean air, everywhere, at all times.
2. It is the policy of Multnomah County to limit, to the extent practicable, human sources of air pollution through targeted interventions that will limit pollution from wood burning.
3. It is the policy of Multnomah County to strive for ambient air quality concentrations that are aligned with the benchmarks set out by the World Health Organization for fine and coarse PM; Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) 5 µg/m³ annual mean, 15 µg/m³ 24-hour mean; Coarse particulate matter (PM10) 15 µg/m³ annual mean, 45 µg/m³ 24-hour mean.
4. It is the policy of Multnomah County to prioritize reducing the cumulative burden of air pollution, in particular from wood burning, in environmental justice communities.

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5. To support the Chair in implementing a wood stove replacement program and other policies that will minimize wood smoke pollution.

ADOPTED this 10th day of February, 2022.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Deborah Kafoury, Chair

REVIEWED:
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
Katherine Thomas, Assistant County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Commissioner Jayapal and Commissioner Vega Pederson