

## Thurston County Maintenance Area State Implementation Plan Revision

In June 2013, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) will submit proposed State Implementation Plan (SIP) revisions to EPA for the Thurston County Maintenance Area (TCMA). This area includes Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater and the unincorporated areas lying within or between the cities' boundaries. No new rules or requirements are being proposed.

### **Q: What is a SIP, and why does Thurston County have one?**

**A:** A SIP is a plan to help an area meet air quality standards. In the late 1980s, the TCMA violated the federal 24-hour standard for particulate matter ten microns or less (PM<sub>10</sub>), and EPA classified it as a "nonattainment area." A nonattainment area is one that does not meet at least one air quality standard. States must prepare SIPs for these areas. The Clean Air Act requires maintenance areas have plans ensuring that they will continue to meet the standard. By 1991, the TCMA met the PM<sub>10</sub> standard due to cleaner woodstoves, burn bans, and restrictions on outdoor burning. In 2000, EPA reclassified the area to a "maintenance area" and approved the first maintenance plan. This SIP revision will be the final ten-year plan assuring compliance until 2020.

### **Q: Why is Ecology revising the SIP?**

**A:** Ecology is revising Washington's SIP to meet federal requirements. Ecology must submit a plan to EPA that shows how the Thurston County Maintenance Area will continue to meet the particulate matter standard through 2020.

### **Q: What is PM<sub>10</sub> and why is it a problem?**

**A:** PM<sub>10</sub> is small particles in the air that are 10 microns in diameter or less. Sources include smoke from wood stoves, fireplaces, and outdoor burning, as well as dust. Particulate matter can cause or worsen respiratory problems, especially for children and the elderly.

### WHY IT MATTERS

SIPs contain measures that help state and local agencies prevent and control PM<sub>10</sub>, or small particles in the air.

Most of the PM<sub>10</sub> in the Thurston County area comes from wood smoke. Wood smoke is most dangerous to the health of infants and children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with lung or heart disease.

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### Special accommodations:

If you require special accommodations or need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Air Quality Program at 360-407-6600. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

**Q: Does the SIP revision contain any new requirements?**

**A:** No. Current requirements are sufficient to ensure the TCMA continues to meet the federal standard for PM<sub>10</sub>. These include:

- Calling burn bans during periods of poor air quality
- Requiring new wood heating devices that meet Washington standards
- Banning the transfer or sale of uncertified wood stoves
- Restricting outdoor burning

**Q: What do I need to know about burn bans?**

**A:** The Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA) calls two types of air quality burn bans: Stage 1 and Stage 2. During a Stage 1 burn ban, you may only burn wood in a certified device. No burning is allowed during a Stage 2 burn ban, even in certified wood and pellet stoves.

You are allowed to burn wood during a burn ban if it is your only adequate source of heat. Otherwise, use a cleaner source of heat (such as a furnace or baseboard heaters) until the burn ban is lifted.

For more information about burn bans, go to: <http://www.orcaa.org/>

**Q: What can I do to help the TCMA continue to meet the PM<sub>10</sub> standard?**

**A:** If you heat with wood, there are several ways you can help:

- Burn cleanly. Make sure your firewood has been stored dry for six months or longer.
- Observe burn bans. Sign up for notification at: <http://www.orcaa.org/forms/email-news-alert-signup/>
- Minimize use of your wood stove on days with poor air quality.
- Replace your old uncertified stove. ORCAA offers grants to help residents in qualified areas to replace their wood stoves, fireplaces or inserts with gas or electric units or cleaner burning woodstoves. To learn more, visit <http://www.orcaa.org/burning/wood-stove-program>.