

San Luis Obispo County Residential Woodburning Rule



Larry Allen

Rule Requirements

- Only APCD-approved woodburning device allowed in new or remodel residential construction:
 - EPA Phase II-certified devices
 - Uncertified devices that demonstrate compliance EPA-certified emission limits
 - Pellet-fueled wood heaters
 - Dedicated gas fireplaces
 - Existing fireplaces & woodstoves not affected
- Non-compliant, used devices may not be sold in SLO county
- Retailers required to distribute info on rule
- Voluntary curtailment may be implemented if needed

Adoption Process

- Proposed control measure in 1991 Clean Air Plan
- Advisory committee to scope and review draft rule
- Numerous workshops throughout county
- Significant media coverage
- Adopted by Board in 1993



Implementation

- Outreach to all planning/building officials, vendors, architects, builders and related industry
- Training for all planning/building inspectors & other compliance personnel
- Significant interactions with builders, fireplace manufacturers & general public on rule requirements



Results

- Dedicated gas fireplaces now most common in new homes and remodels
- Declining trend in PM_{10} levels in areas most affected by woodsmoke
- Significant avoided emissions (52 tons per year)
- Prevented installation of an estimated 13,000 high emission fireplaces since rule adoption
- Public better educated on health effects of woodsmoke



Implementation Issues

- Enforcement by city/county code compliance inspectors
 - Rule training for new inspectors is poor
 - APCD inspection of new residences not feasible
 - APCD tracking of vendors & resale is spotty
- Rule nuances subject to interpretation
 - House remodel/repair affecting non-compliant unit
 - Masonry fireplace as dedicated gas-fired unit
- Realtors and general public often misinformed
- Rule circumvention



Potential Program Improvements

- Enhance District and other partner-based outreach programs to increase public awareness
- Use mitigation grant funds to implement a woodstove change-out incentive program
- Expand periodic training of city and county planning and building department staff and inspectors
- Develop and implement a voluntary curtailment program on days with poor air quality
- Add a requirement to replace or remove non-certified devices upon the sale of an existing home