

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CLEAN AIR ACTION TEAM RECOMMENDS IMMEDIATE ACTION TO BRING CLEANER CARS AND FUEL TO UTAH AND TO ELIMINATE WOOD BURNING**

On October 15, 2013, Governor Gary Herbert announced that he was asking Envision Utah to convene and facilitate the efforts of a Clean Air Action Team. The independent team was asked to work throughout 2014 to finalize a set of broadly supported recommendations to improve our air quality, but team members wished to make more immediate recommendations on two high-priority items: (1) bring cleaner cars and fuel to Utah as soon as possible, and (2) eliminate wood burning. These two actions alone could potentially cut fine particulate during our winter inversions by as much as 10–20% in the short term, and by even more over time as older cars are replaced by the newer, cleaner cars.

The Utah Division of Air Quality estimates that vehicles make up the majority of local emissions, accounting for around 57% overall. Improvements in Utah’s cars and fuel to what is known as the “Tier 3” standards will greatly reduce the impact of vehicle emissions on the overall air quality. Together, the cars and fuel are estimated to reduce vehicle emissions by 70–80%.

“It is likely that no other single feasible strategy would have a greater impact on our air quality,” said Robert Grow, President and CEO of Envision Utah.

To produce fuel with lower sulfur, Utah’s refineries would likely have to undertake expensive upgrades. “They would be heroes,” Grow said. “Putting the cleaner fuel in our cars would produce an almost immediate benefit to our air that would be pretty significant—close to a 10% reduction in pollution right off the bat.”

The cars cost only a fraction more for the pollution reductions, in the range of \$135 per car, and would lead to even greater pollution reductions over time as Utahns replace their current cars with cleaner ones.

The new generation of cars are already on the market but not widely sold in Utah. The Clean Air Action Team feels strongly that all new cars sold in Utah should meet these standards. You don’t have to wait for them to be required, though; when you buy a car, look for one with a smog rating of 8, 9, or 10.

Wood burning is estimated to account for around 10% of the Wasatch Front’s wintertime pollution problem.

“Burning wood or coal is one of the worst things we can do for our air,” said Michelle Hofmann, a physician at Riverton Hospital and a professor at the University of Utah who also serves as a co-chair of

the Clean Air Action Team. “If people only understood the health impacts, which are worst for those in the home where the burning is happening, they would never light up in the first place.”

Currently, burning is prohibited in the winter when fine particulate exceeds 25ug/m<sup>3</sup>, except for around 200 homes that are allowed to burn wood because it is their sole source of heat. The Clean Air Action Team proposes eliminating wood burning by taking a few key steps:

- Fund replacement of wood stoves in those homes that have no other heat source, at an estimated price tag of less than \$2 million, and phase out the “sole source heating” exemption.
- Increase enforcement on “no burn” days.
- Impose “no burn” restrictions as soon as an inversion starts to build—essentially immediately after a storm ends. Whatever is put in the air before pollution reaches the current trigger stays in the air throughout the inversion.
- Increase public education efforts regarding the harms of burning wood or coal.

The Clean Air Action Team includes representatives from health care, business, nonprofit organizations, government, academia, transportation, and more. These recommendations can then be implemented by government, businesses, and individuals; it is likely the broadest group ever assembled in Utah to evaluate strategies and develop a holistic approach to solving our air quality issues. All ideas are on the table for evaluation. While cleaner cars and fuel and eliminating wood burning were put forward as immediate recommendations, additional recommendations will be studied throughout 2014 in order to reach consensus on a holistic proposal.

More information on the Clean Air Action Team can be found at [www.envisionutah.org](http://www.envisionutah.org).

### **About Envision Utah**

Envision Utah is a nonprofit public/private partnership that facilitates informed public involvement to explore solutions to the challenges presented by growth. Their transparent grassroots approach inspires trust, gives residents a voice, and draws on public values.

The Clean Air Action Team is one element of the *Your Utah, Your Future* process that is being facilitated by Envision Utah at the request of Governor Herbert. *Your Utah, Your Future* is a collaborative effort to establish a vision together for our Utah and our future as we add another 2.5 million people by 2050.

Learn more at [www.envisionutah.org](http://www.envisionutah.org).

