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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Air Stagnation Alert could mean smoky skies for the valley:
“Yellow” wood-burning advisory called

The National Weather Service has issued an air stagnation alert for the southern Willamette Valley through Friday morning at 10:00 a.m. due to forecasted stagnant weather with cold nights and foggy mornings over the next few days.

“The current air stagnation alert was issued on Tuesday, December 5. Due to the stagnation, air quality is deteriorating and pollution levels may continue to rise in the Eugene/Springfield area,” said Sally Markos, LRAPA spokesperson. “Low overnight temperatures will produce a strong surface-based inversion that will keep pollutants trapped near the ground.” This effect can cause health problems for sensitive individuals.

“Fine particles from smoke and vehicle exhaust get trapped at ground-level, where they can be inhaled deeply into the lungs and damage delicate lung tissues,” said Markos. People most at risk are those with asthma, heart or lung diseases, and older adults and children. They should avoid prolonged exercise or heavy exertion if they experience health symptoms, and follow their doctor’s advice.

The best way to minimize pollution during this type of wintertime weather is to avoid using woodstoves and fireplaces if possible. As a result, a **yellow** home wood heating advisory has been issued by LRAPA for the cities of Eugene and Springfield and the surrounding urban growth boundary. Residents are asked not to burn unless necessary. “If people need to burn, we ask that they take extra precautions to burn cleanly by burning small, hot fires, leaving stove dampers open and allowing fires to burn out at the end of the evening,” Markos explained.

Typically, wintertime pollution levels climb during the night and early morning hours, and then drop off during the daytime hours; however, the prolonged stagnation may cause levels to build up over several days.

LRAPA will continue to monitor the air quality conditions and provide additional information as needed.

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