

DATE: September 3, 2019

TO: Okanogan County Regional Planning Commission
Courtney Ingle, Okanogan Planning Director
123 Fifth Avenue North
Room # 130
Okanogan, Washington 98840

FROM: Eve Russell
POB 32
Carlton, Washington 98814

RE: Russell Comments for the Draft Comprehensive Plan and the DEIS

Dear Okanogan County Regional Planning Commissioners and Planning Director, Courtney Ingle,

As a life long Okanogan County resident raised in Carlton, Washington, I have experienced the advantages of living in a remote, rural community which values hard work, integrity, and neighborliness.

In addition to my BA in Community Studies from UCSC, I am a Registered Nurse with working experience in our valley health clinics, and, as a county-wide home health and hospice nurse. Among my many concerns about health related issues, I am deeply concerned about air quality, particularly since we have endured five years of wildfire, smoke-filled skies which seriously and negatively effect everyone's health and well-being.

I support and have included the following comments about air quality prepared by the Methow Valley Citizens' Council, and I recommend that Okanogan County decision makers include in our 2019 County Comprehensive Plan the Council's highly researched and informed comments which are listed below.

Air Quality

Is it in the Comp Plan? No

Where should it be in the Comp Plan? New part of Chapter 12 Natural Environment

New proposed language:

Objectives/Rationale: The Okanogan and Methow valleys regularly experience impaired air quality caused by wood stoves and open burning. These impairments are felt most heavily by the elderly, children, pregnant women, individuals with cardiovascular impairments and those with compromised immune systems. Poor air quality is most apparent in the winter from uncertified wood stoves, and in the spring and fall from open burning.

While the Department of Ecology maintains regulatory jurisdiction over air resources in Okanogan County, County government has an important role in reducing particulate as well as informing the public of risks associated with wood smoke. It is important to reduce man-caused particulate because smoke from wildfires is expected to increase due to climate change and other factors.

Goal: Protect the population of Okanogan County by reducing particulate emissions from wood stoves and open burning.

Policy: Okanogan County will actively work with the Department of Ecology and NGOs to reduce exposure to man-caused particulates through incentives, fees, building code enforcement, burn bans, and information dissemination.

Recommended implementation Measures:

New Homes: Okanogan County will examine planning and building codes to seek incentives and disincentives to encourage new homes to heat with devices other than wood stoves, especially in the air sheds that experience poor winter air quality.

For example, wood or pellet stoves could have an impact fee assessed, and that fee could then help with replacing uncertified wood stoves. Incentives to forgo wood stoves in new homes might include relief from certain building code requirements, and providing information on the air quality problems and safety (chimney fires, indoor air pollution) associated with wood stove emissions.

Existing homes: Work with the Department of Ecology to encourage programs that assist low income residents of the air shed to convert from inefficient uncertified wood stoves or fireplaces to pellet stoves, propane, certified stoves, or other affordable heat sources, including electric, that have fewer particulate emissions.

Open Burning: Open burning of yard and forest debris is a poor practice, especially during atmospheric inversions. The County should support alternatives such as neighborhood chipping. Burn bans should be imposed not just for fire danger, but during inversions.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments to wisely guide the formulation of Okanogan County's Comprehensive Plan 2019.

Sincerely,



Eve Russell