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ADEM Reminds Alabamians of Burn Ban

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is reminding Alabamians of the open burning ban going into effect for 12 counties. The ban, which is designed to protect air quality, is effective from May through October and includes Baldwin, DeKalb, Etowah, Jefferson, Lawrence, Madison, Mobile, Montgomery, Morgan, Russell, Shelby, and Talladega counties.

The ban is in effect each year for the warmer months to combat the formation of ground-level ozone and the generation of fine particulate matter. Prohibiting the open burning of wood, tree trimmings, brush, and debris generated by land clearing and construction/demolition activities is an effective way to reduce the formation of ground-level ozone, which is formed when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides react in the presence of heat and sunlight. Fine particulate matter is found in the smoke from the open burning of vegetation and wood.

Though beneficial in the upper atmosphere, ozone is a respiratory irritant when found at ground level. In addition, fine particulate matter can travel deep into the lungs and cause respiratory distress.

According to ADEM Director Trey Glenn, “The burn ban is one of many tools that the Department utilizes to maintain air quality in Alabama. ADEM administers a wide-range of environmental programs under the federal Clean Air Act and is continuously working to ensure that all Alabama citizens have clean air to breath.”

In lieu of open burning, the Department suggests composting yard waste and using leaves, straw, and grass clippings for mulch. In addition to providing air quality benefits, utilizing mulch in flower beds and gardens will also support efforts to conserve water resources.

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