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ADEM Reminds Alabamians of Open Burning Ban

MONTGOMERY – To protect air quality, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management is reminding Alabamians of the open burning ban going into effect for 12 counties. The ban 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 open burning of vegetation and wood.

“We are constantly implementing programs and activities to protect the health and well being of Alabama citizens,” said ADEM Director Trey Glenn. “The open burning ban is a useful tool to help us safeguard our environment and ensure Alabama maintains clean air.”

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.

ADEM administers the federal Clean Air Act in Alabama and is working to ensure that reduced ozone levels and better air quality continue in the state.

Composting yard waste and using leaves/grass clippings for mulch are alternatives to open burning.

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