

Judging from just the visual smoke plumes and haze that are now common in the Ukiah valley, permit burning has extended the smoke impacts of our wildfire season into the winter months with now almost a year-round negative air quality health impact on our inland population. I'd appreciate AQMD comparison air quality data from years since 2001 (when the Masonite plant closed), particularly for months when permit burning occurs. Also, permit burning releases evermore CO2 which contributes to climate change and bigger, more destructive wildfires, plus particulate matter which affects respiratory health.

What alternatives are there to open burning of woody debris? Chipping is one. it provides a useful by-product: garden mulch, which helps to retain soil moisture and keep plant roots cool, eventually becoming a valuable soil amendment. Please consider these examples:

In Lake Tahoe, people can sign up for chipping of their woody debris piles, and members of the wildland fire crew come around with a chipper and do the work. The El Dorado County Fire Safe Council received a grant for a chipper program that helps people clear defensible space around their homes AND get free mulch from the product. In Hayward, the fire department received a California Fire Safe Council grant to provide chipping to residential neighborhoods. Please explore these options to mitigate air quality impacts of permit burning.



No-Cost Residential Chipping Program for Hayward and Fairview Residents East of Mission Blvd. Since 2012, the City has applied for and received grant funding for its defensible space efforts, which includes a free on-site chipping service program. The program is grant funded and provided on a first-come-first-serve basis as funds are available. Funding is administered by a grant from the Cooperative Fire Program of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Pacific Southwest Region, through the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC). CFSC has recently awarded the City, funds to run these programs during 2019 and 2020.

Sincerely, —Suzanne Pletcher, Ukiah