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## **Alaska Receives Grant Award to Improve Air Quality in Fairbanks and North Pole**

(FAIRBANKS, AK) — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recommended the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) receive a Target Air Shed grant award of \$2.5 million dollars. The funds will be used for a wood and coal heater Change Out Program in the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB). This EPA grant was developed to help reduce air pollution in communities with the highest levels of fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and ozone ambient air concentrations in the nation.

Wood smoke is the main source of PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution in the FNSB, and the Change Out Program will allow wood stoves, hydronic heaters, and fireplaces to be replaced with a variety of cleaner burning EPA-certified stoves and heaters, including natural gas heaters.

"We appreciate EPA making these funds available. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Borough to improve air quality and protect human health," said DEC Commissioner, Larry Hartig.

FNSB will administer the Change Out Program and document the project's benefits. FNSB Mayor Kassel said, "This generous grant will enable us to replace significantly more outdated stoves than we could on our own."

Participants in the existing Change Out Program qualified for an average reimbursement of about \$3,800. Each time an individual in the FNSB burns dry wood and replaces older stoves with newer EPA-certified stoves, they improve the quality of the air for themselves, their family, and their community.

For more information on air quality in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, visit <http://www.fnsb.us/transportation/Pages/Air-Quality.aspx>

For more information on air quality in Alaska, visit the DEC Air Quality Division website at <http://dec.alaska.gov/air>.

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