



For Immediate Release  
January 24, 2007

Contact: Karen M. Schkolnick  
415.816.5353 (cell)

## *Spare the Air* TONIGHT! Advisories Reflect New Air Quality Standard

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is issuing a *Spare the Air Tonight* Advisory for this evening, Wednesday, January 24. Forecasts predict that particulate pollution concentrations will reach unhealthy levels. The Air District is asking Bay Area residents **to not burn wood and to limit their driving**, in order to help reduce particulate emissions. This is the **23rd** alert this season.

This winter, to be more protective of public health, the U.S. EPA lowered the 24-hour average national standard for particulate matter 2.5 micrometers in size (PM 2.5) from 65 micrograms per cubic meter to 35 micrograms per cubic meter. The Air District has lowered its Spare the Air Tonight threshold accordingly.

"The new particulate standard, in combination with some long intervals of cold, still weather, has resulted in a record number of Spare the Air Tonight episodes this winter," said Jack Broadbent, the Air District's Executive Officer. "It's important to note that this does not represent any significant deterioration in Bay Area air quality. It just means that the Air District is staying ahead of the curve in protecting the public from the potential health effects of particulate pollution."

Still, cool weather conditions favor the buildup of particulate matter. On winter evenings, the earth cools the air close to the ground, which creates an inversion layer of warmer air above. When there is no wind, pollution trapped under this lid of warm air can build up rapidly to unhealthy levels. Particulate pollution is most highly concentrated at night and in the early morning hours.

***There is no free transit during the Spare the Air Tonight season.***

***Some tips for a clean new year:*** Convert your wood-burning fireplace to a natural gas stove. Make a commitment to drive less and consider buying a hybrid. Individual actions are vitally important to attaining and maintaining clean air in 2007.

For more information call 1-800 HELP AIR  
or visit our website: [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org)

###