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Immediate Release

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Public Invited to Meeting on Smoke Management in Las Cruces

(Santa Fe, NM) —The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is hosting a meeting **Thursday, February 3 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** at the Club Fusion Teen Center, 101 E. Union, in Las Cruces to better familiarize the public with the state's requirements regarding outdoor burning and the long-term benefits to New Mexico's air quality.

The presentation will include information on trash and vegetative burning. Burning of trash is no longer allowed in New Mexico. Burning of vegetative material is allowed with restrictions. This applies to all lands in New Mexico except for Bernalillo County and tribal lands, which have their own air quality regulations and agencies.

"Now that the smoke management program has completed its first year of operation, we feel that the program has done a good job of allowing necessary burning while ensuring that New Mexico's air quality is protected", said Sandra Ely, Chief of NMED's Air Quality Bureau. "We are continuing to look for ways to improve the program."

Air Quality Bureau staff will be available at the meeting to explain the requirements for burning of vegetative material and to respond to questions. Everyone who burns is encouraged to attend.

Large-scale burn projects, such as most prescribed burning of forest and rangeland and burning of large amounts of orchard trimmings, must be registered with the Smoke Management Program. To assist burners with registering burn projects for the upcoming year, Air Quality Bureau staff will be available on Thursday, February 3rd, from 1 to 4 pm and Friday, February 4th, from 8 am to noon, at the Environment Department's Las Cruces office at 1170 North Solano Drive. Please call 1-800-224-7009 and ask for Smoke Management to schedule a time to talk with a staff member and find out what information to bring. Walk-ins are also encouraged.

For more information, contact Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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