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at a Time**

We bring people  
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tobacco use, bad air  
and the asthma  
epidemic.



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**King County Tops State with 111 Days of Poor Air Quality**

Region's Most Densely Populated Counties Experience Poor Air Quality One Day Per Week

**Seattle, WA** Today, the American Lung Association of Washington releases its annual *State of the Air in Washington* report for Clean Air month in May. The report provides air quality data from around the state, shares the stories of people impacted daily by poor air quality, and shares how people can take steps to reduce air pollution.

"Most of our densely populated counties still experience, on average, one day a week when air pollution levels rise and can affect people with respiratory and lung disease conditions," said Marina Cofer-Wildsmith, CEO, American Lung Association of Washington. "In Washington state, we have more than 500,000 people living with asthma, including 120,000 children, and their lives are impacted by poor air quality," Cofer-Wildsmith added.

The report shows that King County topped the charts in 2005 with 106 days that registered "Moderate" and five that registered "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index. Other counties that experienced an average of at least one day per week when the air quality monitored was "Moderate" or "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" are Stevens (94), Pierce (90), Snohomish (77), Spokane (74), Clark (65) and Yakima (63). Two of the main contributors to poor air quality are diesel exhaust and wood smoke.

"The *State of the Air in Washington* report underscores the need for every one of us to take steps to reduce air pollution. That means driving less and driving cleaner vehicles that emit fewer pollutants," said Cofer-Wildsmith.

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With higher gas prices, people have extra incentives to reduce their impacts on air quality – one step at a time. Consider taking the bus, joining a vanpool program, carpooling with colleagues or neighbors, teleworking or becoming a member of Flexcar, a car-sharing program in some cities in western Washington.

To reduce the impacts of woodsmoke consider replacing an older wood stove or open fireplace. Several regional air quality agencies provide creative incentive programs for people to switch to clean-burning hearth appliances, including natural gas and propane stoves and fireplace inserts, pellet stoves and newer and cleaner EPA-certified wood stoves.

“We also need to encourage policymakers to adopt tougher air quality measures and fund programs aimed at reducing air pollution, like those to reduce diesel pollution, particularly from maritime sources, Cofer-Wildsmith said.”

The report recognizes the efforts of businesses, public agencies and maritime operations working in partnership with air quality agencies to reduce the impact of diesel exhaust by changing to cleaner fuels and retrofitting equipment. One example cited is a consortium of ports, maritime businesses, regulators and others that have formed the Puget Sound Maritime Air Forum to quantify maritime-source emissions and identify voluntary, cost-effective strategies for reducing emissions.

To read the issues and stories in the *State of the Air in Washington* report, visit

[http://www.alaw.org/pdfs/state\\_of\\_the\\_air\\_in\\_washington\\_2006\\_report.pdf](http://www.alaw.org/pdfs/state_of_the_air_in_washington_2006_report.pdf)

Celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the American Lung Association of Washington has been fighting tobacco use, bad air and the asthma epidemic. Our goals include reducing tobacco use, especially among young people; preventing and controlling air pollution and fighting asthma. For more information about the American Lung Association of Washington programs or to volunteer, please call 1-800-LUNG-USA or visit [www.alaw.org](http://www.alaw.org)