September 10th, 2018

To: Coalition of Local Health Officials

Fr: Morgan Cowling

Re: Prescribed Burn Oregon Administrative Rules

Background

The Department of Environmental Quality has developed new guidance for the Oregon Department of Forestry permitting of prescribed burns. In the past there has been zero tolerance for allowing prescribed burns effect air quality of communities/ population centers. The Administrative Rules that are currently out for public comment would change that zero tolerance policy and create a two –tiered definition for smoke intrusion.

The Smoke Intrusion means that ground level smoke enters into a Smoke Sensitive Recepter Area and that *meets or exceeds 70 micrograms per cubic meter for any one-hour period* and/or averages at or above 26micrograms per cubic meter for a 24-hour period, measured from midnight to midnight beginning on the first day of smoke entrance.

Communities may apply for an exception to the one-hour threshold IF certain requirements are met including having a community response plan that is coordinated through the “county health department.”

Public comment is due by Friday, September 14th, 2018. Based on conversations with Lane County, DEQ and reading through the OARs. I am recommending that CLHO make the following recommendations.

1. Clarify the process in the Oregon Administrative Rule for applying for an exception that is separate from just having a “Community Response Plan”
2. Change “County Health Department” to “Local Public Health Authority” to capture the health district and ensure information gets to the right people.
3. Local Public Health Authorities could coordinate a Community Response Plan to a variance request once the community or city or county jurisdiction instigates the process of asking for an exception request, not prior to