

MEDIA RELEASE

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Today the citizen activist group **Voices for Good Air**, Smithers, released its *Position Paper on Smoke and Carbon Emissions from Forestry Slash Burning*.

Logging slash is the woody and leafy material left as waste when sawlogs or pulpwood are harvested from forests and plantations. In British Columbia, most of this material remains in the cutblocks, where, under the B.C. Wildfire Act and Wildfire Regulation, it must subsequently be disposed of. One of the permitted methods of disposal is burning; and in fact the method preferred by most logging operators is burning of slash piles.

Across B.C., enormous quantities of logging slash are burnt each year – in the neighbourhood of 10,000,000 tonnes. The slash fires produce smoke which drifts widely across settled areas, where there is good reason to suspect it has serious impacts on human health and socio-economic development. At the same time, the slash fires emit gigantic volumes of greenhouse gases – about five times as much carbon dioxide equivalent as is released by residential heating in the entire province or by light-duty gasoline engines.

The *Position Paper* **first** describes and critiques four reasons most commonly given for why forestry waste is burned. **Secondly**, it offers ten well-founded reasons why logging slash should not be burned. **Thirdly**, the paper identifies five scientifically defensible alternatives to burning logging slash.

Next, the *Position Paper* proposes an interim measure to address the societal problem of slash burning. That is a Moratorium on slash burning.

In conclusion, the *Position Paper* argues that the only satisfactory solution to the harms forestry slash burning imposes on British Columbians and the world is a Complete or nearly complete ban on burning. However, if a complete ban on forestry slash burning proves to be too draconian or politically impossible to institute, then the paper suggests A partial solution: A carbon tax on wood destined for burning as slash.

Voices for Good Air is a network of concerned citizens based in the Bulkley Valley of northwestern British Columbia. It is affiliated with the citizen advocacy network Clean Air Now (CAN).

The full *Position Paper* is available on the CAN Web site: <https://can-bv.ca>.

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