

## Policy Statements – Fireplace Use

### Issue: “Check Before you Burn”

What Sacramento Association of REALTORS® Says:

The Sacramento Association of REALTORS® supports “Check Before you Burn” and similar efforts.

#### Background:

Programs like check before you burn decrease the number of toxins in the air during winter months which helps those individuals sensitive to air quality, like people with asthma. Education rather than mandates banning wood burning stoves is a more efficient policy. Teaching people about what days they should refrain from using fireplaces, what kind of wood to burn, and the importance of regular chimney sweeping can greatly decrease the amount of pollution caused by fireplaces without unnecessary mandates.

Most people want to support the environment, and would comply with a program such as check before you burn. The people who do choose to heat their home primarily with wood, which is a very small percentage, choose to do so because it is the least expensive form of heat. Forcing them to use electric or natural gas has the potential to create a financial burden.

What Sacramento Association of REALTORS® Says:

SAR does not support mandatory fireplace retrofitting, or an outright ban on wood burning stoves.

#### Background:

While wood burning does produce some pollution, there are more efficient ways to diminish global warming than banning fireplaces. The number of homes with wood burning stoves is quickly declining, there were 291,008 fewer fireplaces installed in homes throughout the United States in 2007 than 1998. Most people who do own fireplaces do not use them as their primary source of heat. Fireplace owners generally use their fireplaces 32 times per year, at an average of 3.6 hours per use. The typical fireplace owner enjoys their fireplace because of the warm atmosphere and homey feeling it creates.

Requiring fireplace retrofits would entail a significant expense to homeowners, reducing the total equity they have in their home. Wood burning is the least expensive method of heating a home. Banning this practice could create a financial hardship for those who can not afford to heat with electricity or natural gas.