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### **-PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE-**

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## **Lake County's Annual Burn Ban Starts May 1, 2012**

The annual burn ban starts on Sunday, May 1, 2012 to address concerns over both fire hazard and air quality. The burn restriction applies to all areas in Lake County. All burn permits expire on April 30, 2012. An annual burn ban was first implemented in 1986 in response to weather conditions that often create extreme fire danger and poor air quality. For many years a managed approach which incorporates Fire and Air agency concerns has been implemented and improved upon. The ban as implemented allows a quick fire agency response to all fires observed from May 1<sup>st</sup> on, as they are all assumed to be uncontrolled fires unless specifically authorized by an exemption for time and place. This successful program is one of the primary reasons Lake County has superior and healthful air quality.

The ban also helps prevent smoke impacts to the general public and large planned outdoor events by unrestricted vegetative waste burns. The burn ban includes ALL open waste burning, though exceptions are possible for agricultural operations, essential control burns for fire safety projects, public safety burns, and others. To obtain an exemption for a necessary burn after May 1, first contact the LCAQMD to determine need, then your local Fire Protection Agency so that your burn site can be inspected and evaluated for fire safety. Only after the Fire Agency has inspected the burn site and notified the Lake County Air Quality Management District that the proposed burn is fire safe, can you obtain a written exemption permit.

Anyone responsible for open burning without a valid written exemption permit may be subject to a citation, fines, and the cost of the Fire Agency response to extinguish the fire. Burn restrictions will remain in effect until CalFire declares an end to fire season. Please help us reduce the danger and losses caused by uncontrolled fires, and protect our designation as the only air basin in the State to meet all Ambient Air Quality Standards. Public cooperation is greatly appreciated and results in a safer and more healthful environment for all of us.