

BEFORE THE COUNCIL
OF THE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDING)	RESOLUTION NO. 81-219
A REDUCTION IN THE AREA SUBJECT)	
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL)	Introduced by the
QUALITY BAN ON BACKYARD BURNING)	Regional Services Committee
UNTIL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND)	
ALTERNATIVES ARE DEVELOPED)	

WHEREAS, The Environmental Quality Commission (EQC), following a public hearing at its December 19, 1980 meeting, acted to reaffirm a ban on residential backyard burning in all areas of Multnomah, Clackamas, Columbia and Washington Counties, effective December 31, 1980; and

WHEREAS, The EQC, following a public hearing on December 28, 1980, adopted a temporary rule which removed the ban on open burning of domestic waste for 180 days in Columbia County and certain rural areas of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties; and

WHEREAS, The December 29 temporary rule still includes large areas where there is an ongoing need to dispose of yard debris; and

WHEREAS, The DEQ is currently attempting to assess the overall impact of a domestic waste burning ban and is developing information regarding waste material volume, air quality impact, energy/economic impact, burning alternatives and public attitudes; and

WHEREAS, It is not certain that reasonable alternatives to the current demand for backyard burning can be developed in time to avoid an unacceptable negative impact on the region's landfill; and

WHEREAS, More precise information regarding the effects of controlled burning on air quality should be developed before a ban on the geographic scale encompassed by the temporary rule is adopted; now, therefore,

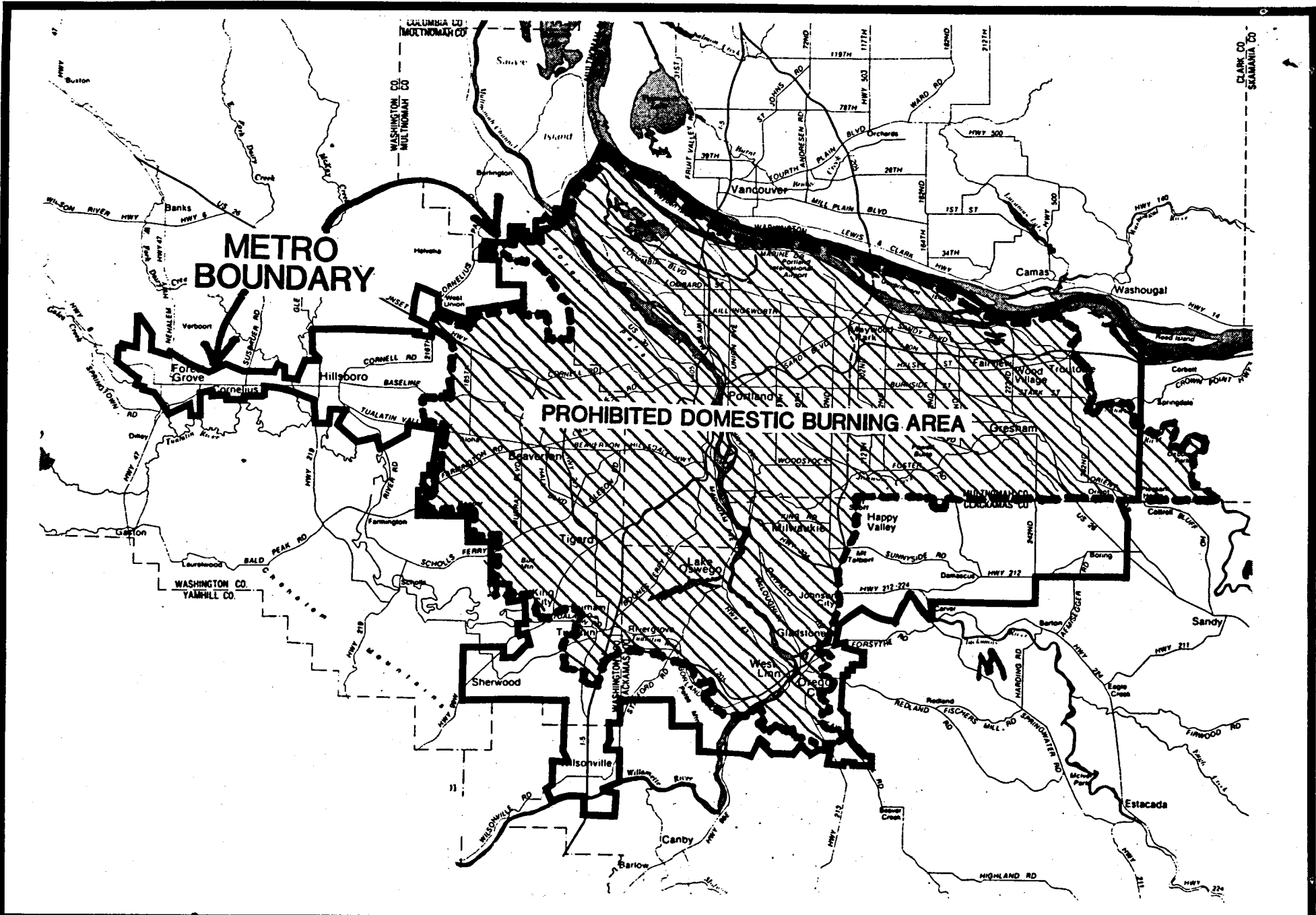
BE IT RESOLVED,

1. That the Metro Council recommends that the EQC reduce the burning ban boundary to an area no larger than the "prohibited domestic burning area" as shown on the map attached as Attachment No. 1 to this Resolution.
2. That Metro and DEQ work with local jurisdictions and fire districts to resolve collection issues, to eliminate individual hardships and to minimize the cost to the area residents.
3. That Metro should seek an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to establish and implement a disposal program for organic rubbish in the Metro area.

ADOPTED by the Council of the Metropolitan Service District
this 22nd day of January, 1981.

Presiding Officer

MK/et
1603B/188A



Attached to Res. No. 81-219



**JANUARY
1981**

PROHIBITED BURNING ZONE

*Res
8/2/19*

A G E N D A M A N A G E M E N T S U M M A R Y

TO: Metro Council
 FROM: Regional Services Committee
 SUBJECT: Reduction of the Area Subject to the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) Ban on Domestic Burning

I. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. ACTION REQUESTED: The Regional Services Committee recommends Council adoption of the attached Resolution.
- B. POLICY IMPACT: The proposed resolution recommends a reduction in the area included within the ban on open burning of domestic waste and also recommends that Metro and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) work jointly to develop alternative means of disposing of organic rubbish. The clearest impacts of the burn ban are on air quality and solid waste loading at regional landfills. The proposed resolution would reduce the landfill impact by recommending a reduction in the geographic area of the ban until alternatives and benefits are more fully explored. Metro would assume a lead role in exploring alternative disposal options.
- C. BUDGET IMPACT: Potential budget impacts include accelerated exhaustion of existing landfill capacity, with a corresponding acceleration of the need to develop additional landfill sites, and potential federal funding to develop an educational program and disposal options for organic rubbish. The proposed resolution recommends action that would reduce the impact of the burn ban on regional landfills. Metro is currently seeking an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to establish a disposal program for organic rubbish.

II. ANALYSIS:

- A. BACKGROUND: Open burning of yard debris creates about 460 tons/year of particulate emissions in the Portland area. This practice was first scheduled to be phased out in 1970 for air quality control reasons. Since then, numerous extensions of the phase out schedule have been granted due to the lack of development of satisfactory alternative disposal methods. At their December 19, 1980, meeting the EQC reaffirmed a phase out date of December 31, 1980, based on substantial testimony by the public that it did not want to be subject to smoke from this source any further and that a further delay of even one season would substantially weaken the incentive to local governments and citizens to develop alternative disposal means.

The DEQ estimates that there are now 84,000 cubic yards of debris being burned every season. With landfill capacity nearly reached and with nearly unanimous support for not disposing of yard debris in landfills, no viable disposal options appear available in the near future for all households in the region. Should this be the case during the normal 1981 spring burn period, substantial pressures will likely develop which will place a severe if not insurmountable strain on enforcement of the ban. This would include illegal dumping with its accompanying fire hazards and severe public backlash.

Backyard burning is generally recognized to not be a problem in rural areas. To minimize the hardships to persons residing in these areas and to reduce the amount of material entering the region's landfills, it is recommended that the boundary for the prohibition on backyard burning be the primarily urban portions of the Metro area, as determined with the assistance of local fire districts. It is further recommended that since the problem of yard debris transcends several jurisdictions, that Metro be the lead agency in informing the public and working with jurisdictions to solve the problem.

- B. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: None.
- C. CONCLUSION: The proposed resolution will express Metro's concern regarding the potential impact of the ban on area landfills and will establish a continuing active role for Metro in solving the problem of disposal of backyard debris.

MH/gl
1710B/188