

AIR QUALITY AWARENESS WEEK

WHEREAS, the US Environmental Protection Agency has designated **May 5-9, 2025** as **National Air Quality Awareness Week** & the theme this year is “Stay Air Aware”, and;

WHEREAS, Air Quality continues to improve in Buncombe County with ground level ozone & fine particle levels down 28 & 60 percent since 2000, and;

WHEREAS, the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency (AB Air Quality) actively monitors ground level ozone & fine particles & other measures of air quality, & works with state & federal partners, businesses & residents to ensure the air is clean, and;

WHEREAS, the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) provides daily county-level air quality forecasts disseminated by the online Air Quality Portal, AB Air Quality, & local media to help residents make informed choices about their outdoor activities, and;

WHEREAS, young children & older adults are at higher risk of experiencing health-related problems from breathing ground-level ozone & particle pollution, and;

WHEREAS, outdoor visibility has improved since 2000, with visibility on our haziest days improving by over 30 miles, and;

WHEREAS, local governments in Buncombe County are leaders in clean air management, adopting & implementing smoke & air pollution ordinances as early as 1916 & 1947 to address air pollution challenges, while recognizing the importance of clean air, and;

WHEREAS, Buncombe County & the City of Asheville entered an interlocal agreement to create the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency to develop & administer an air quality program in their respective jurisdictions, and;

WHEREAS, Buncombe County’s strategic plan includes a vision of “high quality air, water, farmland & renewable energy for future generations” & the county has set a goal of reaching 100% renewable energy for county operations by 2030 & for the entire community by 2042, and;

WHEREAS, Buncombe County has adopted a sustainable fleet policy & energy efficiency standards for new county buildings to reduce pollution, and;

WHEREAS, climate impacts on air quality are expected to result in increases in ground level ozone, fine particles, wildfire smoke, & airborne allergens, and;

WHEREAS, Tropical Storm Helene in 2024 has left an unprecedented amount of debris in our community that has resulted in an increase in open burning & risk of wildfires that emit fine particles into the air & are expected to impact air quality for several years, underscoring the need to increase air quality awareness, and;

WHEREAS, Buncombe County, AB Air Quality, NCDEQ & the US EPA support education & outreach efforts to encourage all residents to access & understand the Air Quality Index as a tool to protect their health & take positive actions in their daily lives to help improve air quality in their community,

NOW THEREFORE, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaim **May 5 - 9, 2025** as **Buncombe County Air Quality Awareness Week**. Residents are encouraged to promote air quality & air quality awareness in their communities by taking simple steps to reduce emissions - including avoiding outdoor open burning when possible, taking fewer car trips or using alternative forms of transportation, replacing vehicles with more fuel efficient & lower emitting technologies, replacing gas powered lawn equipment with electric or battery-operated equipment, implementing energy efficiency measures at home & work, & using products that emit less volatile organic compounds.

This 6th day of May, 2025.



Amanda Edwards, Chair
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners