

More than 100 million Americans breathe sooty air

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More than 100 million people living in 46 metro areas are breathing air that has gotten too full of soot on some days, and now those cities have to clean up their air, the Environmental Protection Agency said Monday.

The EPA added 15 cities to the sooty air list, mostly in states not usually thought of as pollution-prone, such as Alaska, Utah, Idaho and Wisconsin. That's probably because of the prevalence of wood stoves in western and northern regions, a top EPA official said. But environmentalists said the EPA was only doing half its job on soot-laden areas, letting some southern cities with long-term soot problems _ such as Houston _ off the hook.

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