Good morning!

Can you help us monitor local air quality?

The recent smoke from the Quebec wildfires identified that there is a significant gap in monitoring stations in Northern Ontario. It is challenging for agencies and community members to make informed decisions regarding air quality to protect the health due to a lack of monitoring devices and data.

The Timiskaming Health Unit has been working with partners at Health Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to secure PurpleAir monitors for use within our health unit catchment area. The PurpleAir monitors measure particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), which is a pollutant associated with forest fire smoke events.

The use of the PurpleAir monitors is part of a pilot project being undertaken by the Meteorological Services of Canada (a branch of ECCC). These air sensors connect to a map that can be used to assess local air quality data in real time, support data gathering for use by ECCC, and can be used to make informed decisions regarding smoke levels, warnings, and potential health impacts in our local communities.

The project is focused on communities that:
- Do not currently have air sensors through traditional air quality monitoring via the National Air Pollution Surveillance (NAPS) Network.
- Have been impacted by smoke from wildfires.
- Are willing to host an air monitor sensor.

There are currently approximately 10 PurpleAir sensors available for free for our area, and we are reaching out to determine if your municipality/school is willing to host an air sensor to help gather air quality data. The host will be required to:
- Receive and install the sensor according to the instructions provided by ECCC. The installation is simple and should take less than 30 minutes.
- Provide the power for the low-cost sensor.
- Provide the WIFI for the low-cost sensor. (WPA2-PSK but not WPA2-Enterprise authentication or the type that just has a password but not a username and password).
- Perform occasional simple trouble-shooting such as power cycling the sensor (turn off and on).
- Ship the sensors back to ECCC if they fail.
- Host the sensor at least 300 m away from local air pollution sources, such as from industrial sites, high traffic areas, and dusty roads.

More information about the project, as well as the PurpleAir installation instructions are attached. The link to the map product is here: https://cyclone.unbc.ca/aqmap/#3/67.55/-107.64

If you are interested in participating in this project by hosting a PurpleAir monitor, please reply to this email with confirmation of your interest by August 18th. We are also happy to answer any questions regarding this project or can connect you with the appropriate ministry contact.

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