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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

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Smoke from Northern California wildfires prompt health caution

Smoke from the Northern California wildfires have the potential to affect air quality throughout the entire San Joaquin Valley, prompting local air pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement Valley-wide. In addition, smoke impacts will continue from the Lion Fire (Tulare County) especially in the foothills and mountainous areas of Fresno, Tulare and Valley portion of Kern Counties. The health caution will remain in place and smoke impacts will continue until the fires are extinguished.

Smoke from fires can cause serious health problems including lung disease, asthma attacks and increased risk of heart attacks and stroke. Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to the health effects from these pollutants. Anyone being exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move inside to an air-conditioned environment.

Please be advised that the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) monitors are designed to detect the fine particulates (called PM2.5 which are microscopic in size and not visible to the human eye) that exist in smoke. Ash particles are much larger in size and will not be detected by our monitors. Therefore, an area may be experiencing ash impacts from potential fires while the PM monitor reflects a moderate reading. If you can smell smoke or see ash that is an indication that you should be treating air quality conditions as "Unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) and remain indoors.

Residents can check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. Residents can also check the nearest air monitor to their location to determine localized air-quality conditions. Visit the Real-time Air Advisory Network page on the District's website to subscribe for free: www.valleyair.org/RAAN.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).