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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

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Wildfire smoke and blowing dust prompt health caution *Potentially elevated levels of PM2.5 and PM10 pose health concern*

The Valley Air District is issuing a health cautionary statement due to continued smoke impacts from the Creek Fire and SQF Complex Fire, and high winds from the northwest expected to create blowing dust and elevated concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller (PM10) Valley-wide on Friday and Saturday.

The SQF Complex Fire in Tulare County and Creek Fire in Madera/Fresno counties continue to generate smoke, which contains particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller (PM2.5) and are expected to continue until the fires are extinguished.

Local air pollution officials are advising San Joaquin Valley residents to remain indoors in areas effected by wildfire smoke and high winds to avoid exposure to unhealthy levels of particulate matter pollution.

Inhalation of particulate matter pollution can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Individuals with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of PM exposure. Those with existing respiratory conditions, including COVID-19, young children and the elderly, are especially susceptible to health effects from this form of pollution. Anyone experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke or blowing dust should move indoors, to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed. Cloth and paper masks worn to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are not adequate protection from particulate matter pollution.

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) to track air quality at any Valley location by visiting myRAAN.com. District air monitoring stations are designed to detect microscopic PM 2.5 particles that exist in smoke. However, larger particles, such as ash and dust may not be detected. If you see or smell smoke or blowing dust in your immediate vicinity, consider air quality "unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) even if RAAN displays a lower level of pollution.

The public can also check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current and recently past wildfires affecting the Valley. In addition, anyone can follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app on their mobile device.

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). District Outreach and Communications personnel are also available for media interviews via Zoom or by phone.