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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

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Hot, dry, smoky conditions expected this weekend *District cautions Valley residents of increasing health impacts*

Air quality is expected to deteriorate in parts of the Valley over the weekend as temperatures rise and smoke impacts continue from various wildfires burning across California. Air pollution officials caution Valley residents to reduce exposure to particulate matter (PM2.5) emissions by remaining indoors in affected areas if possible.

High pressure is continuing to build over the San Joaquin Valley, causing a lack of smoke dispersion. That pressure acts as a “lid” over the bowl of the Valley and, when coupled with winds out of the northwest, has the potential to continue bringing smoke into the northern Valley during the weekend. Additionally, the central and southern areas of the Valley may experience further smoke impacts from the SQF Fire Complex burning in eastern Tulare County. Smoke impacts are likely to continue in areas throughout the Valley until the fires are extinguished, and may be more noticeable during the night and early morning hours.

PM 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 the health effects from this form of pollution. Anyone experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move indoors, to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed. The common cloth and paper masks individuals are wearing due to COVID-19 concerns may not protect them from wildfire smoke.

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, may not be detected. If you smell smoke or see falling ash in your immediate vicinity, consider air quality “unhealthy” (RAAN Level 4 or higher) even if RAAN displays 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.