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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

Unprecedented California Wildfires Continue to Impact Valley Air Quality *District cautions Valley residents of ongoing health impacts*

Ongoing wildfires from an unprecedented wildfire season happening across California are continuing to cause smoke impacts to all counties of the Valley air basin. Through this upcoming week, PM_{2.5} concentrations are anticipated to remain elevated, resulting in ongoing unhealthy air quality across the region. As a result, the District is reissuing a health caution, which will remain in place until the fires are extinguished. The District anticipates unhealthy air quality to impact the Valley through the coming days and warns residents to stay indoors to reduce their exposure to particulate matter emissions.

The Creek Fire, located in Fresno/Madera counties; the SQF Complex Fire, located in Tulare County; and multiple large and record-breaking wildfires in Northern California are producing smoke that is infiltrating into the San Joaquin Valley which includes San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare Counties, and the valley portion of Kern county.

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.