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Attn: Local news, weather, health
and assignment editors

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Grass fires result in smoke impacts in Fresno and Madera Counties

District cautions Valley residents of possible impacts

Local air pollution officials want to caution central Valley residents of the potential for smoke impacts in Fresno and Madera Counties from multiple small grass fires burning in eastern Fresno County. The District continues to monitor the Sycamore fire south of Tollhouse and the Frontier Fire near Auberry, and cautions residents to minimize their exposure to wildfire smoke in affected areas.

High temperatures and a build-up of dry vegetation presents a high risk for hotter, faster moving wildland fires in foothill and mountain communities surrounding the Valley.

PM 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 their windows closed.

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 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.

