



Media Release

\$5.5 million SAFER grant expands well testing, offers treatment for rural residents near Modesto

Valley Water Collaborative offers free testing of domestic well water

March 17, 2022

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MODESTO – In an effort to improve water quality and supply for private domestic well users in rural areas near Modesto, the State Water Resources Control Board awarded a \$5.5 million grant from the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund to the Valley Water Collaborative to expand its testing program and provide treatment to more households facing contamination issues.

State Water Board Member Laurel Firestone joined the Executive Director of the Valley Water Collaborative, Parry Klassen, at the Agricultural Center today to announce the award.

The Collaborative already administers a program to test for nitrate contamination and provide treatment for domestic wells at no cost. This new partnership with the State Water Board's Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program enables the Collaborative to expand testing to other contaminants, including arsenic and pesticides, and provide treatment free-of-charge to eligible well users.

“Worsening drought conditions cause water supplies to dwindle and water quality to worsen in household wells. Efforts that improve water quality and sustain drinking water sources are critical for those who rely on wells for their water,” Firestone said.

“Partnerships with local organizations in rural areas like the Valley Water Collaborative not only help us mitigate drought impacts to severely affected communities, they also advance the state's commitment to providing safe drinking water to all Californians.”

The Collaborative, an organization of farmers, dairies, food processors and cities, oversees nitrate testing in its regulatory role for the Modesto and Turlock Basin Management Zones under the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) program. Members of the Collaborative cover all expenses related to nitrate contamination and treatment, including distributing bottled water to eligible residents. The new funding will support the Collaborative's provision of reliable in-home water treatment options for arsenic, 1,2,3-TCP and dibromochloropropane (DBCP) as well.



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“Testing for potential contaminants that previously were not covered by our program significantly boosts our efforts to provide safe drinking water options to eligible residents,” said Klassen. “When contaminants are identified in the water supply of households in disadvantaged communities, we can offer a filtering option to ensure residents have access to clean water.”

To participate in the free well-water testing program, domestic well users may apply online at valleywaterc.org or call (209) 750-3867. Once eligibility is confirmed, the Collaborative will test the water and notify residents of the results. If the water proves to be unsafe to drink, the Collaborative will deliver bottled water or install a water treatment device at no charge.

The State Water Board’s mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California’s water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.