An Audio and Visual Enhancement of the Farmworker Wildfire Smoke Alert Text System
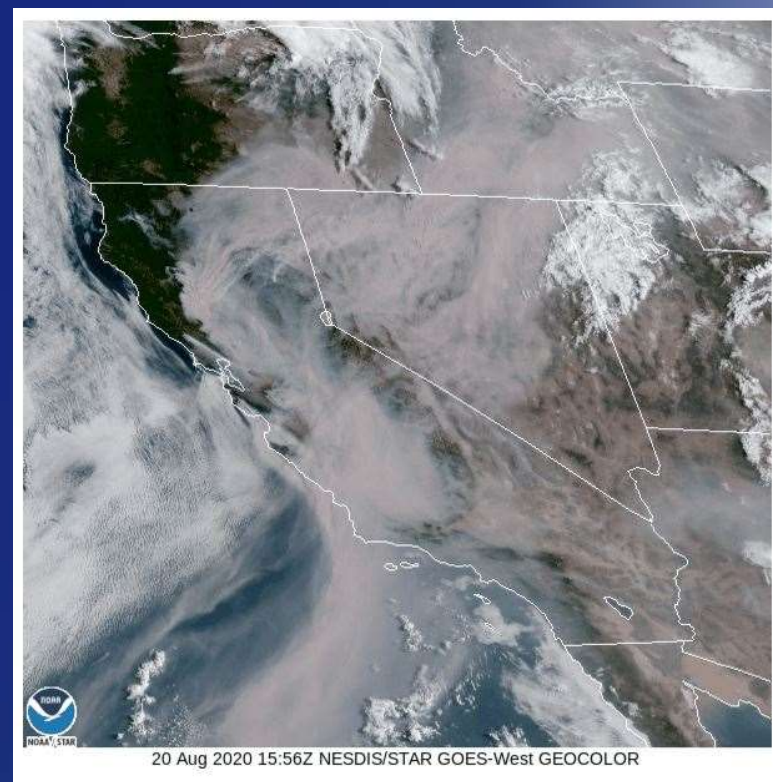
Ventura County Air Pollution Control District
September 22, 2022

Ali Reza Ghasemi, PE
Air Pollution Control Officer

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District

Background

- In order to inform and protect our farming community, the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District has partnered with the County of Ventura Executive Office, County of Ventura Agricultural Commissioner's Office, and the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) to create a first-of-its-kind Farmworker Wildfire Smoke Alert Text System

20 Aug 2020 15:56Z NESDIS/STAR GOES-West GEOCOLOR

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District

Cal/OSHA Regulations - Title 8
§5141.1 Protection from Wildfire Smoke

- Adopted in July 2019, the regulation applies to workplaces where:
    - Current Air Quality Index (AQI) for *PM2.5* due to wildfire smoke is 151 or greater, regardless of the AQI for other pollutants
    - The employer should reasonably anticipate that employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke
- When AQI for *PM 2.5* reaches 151, employers are required to provide N95 masks to outdoor workers for voluntary use
- When the AQI for *PM 2.5* exceeds 500, use of provided masks is mandatory

Photo credit: CAUSE

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District

Who can receive alerts?

- The text alert system is designed for agricultural frontline workers as well as field supervisors in Ventura County
  - The service is free to all subscribers; however, standard data and messaging fees may apply

- Those who wish to receive notifications can opt in by texting 'SMOKE' for English alerts or 'HUMO' for Spanish, Mixteco and Zapoteco alerts to 855-522-0034
  - Currently, the service is near 400 total subscribers
  - 215 opted to receive alerts in Spanish
  - 168 opted to receive alerts in English

Ventura County
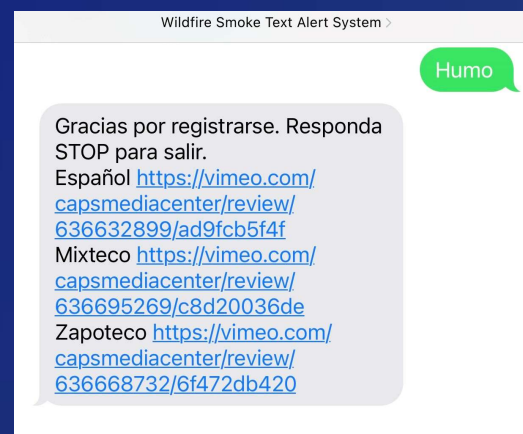Air Pollution
Control District

Alert locations

- Camarillo: CA
- Fillmore: FM
- Moorpark: MP
- Newbury Park: NP
- Ojai: OJ
- Oxnard: OX
- Santa Paula: SP
- Simi Valley: SV
- Thousand Oaks: TO
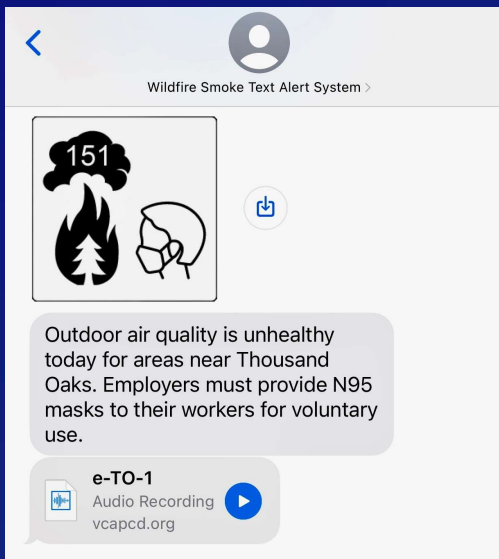- Ventura: VT

Text Alert Sign-up and automatic response

- Automatic reply to the opt-in text is a link for a tutorial video
- Links are for the FAQ videos from the VCAPCD website

- For English, text 'SMOKE' to 855-522-0034
- For Spanish, Mixteco or Zapoteco text 'Humo' to 855-522-0034

Wildfire Smoke Text Alert System >

Smoke

Thank you for signing up, reply STOP to quit.

Wildfire Smoke Alert System
vimeo.com

Wildfire Smoke Text Alert System >

Humo

Gracias por registrarse. Responda STOP para salir.
Español https://vimeo.com/capsmediacenter/review/636632899/ad9fcb5f4f
Mixteco https://vimeo.com/capsmediacenter/review/636695269/c8d20036de
Zapoteco https://vimeo.com/capsmediacenter/review/636668732/6f472db420

Ventura County
Air Pollution
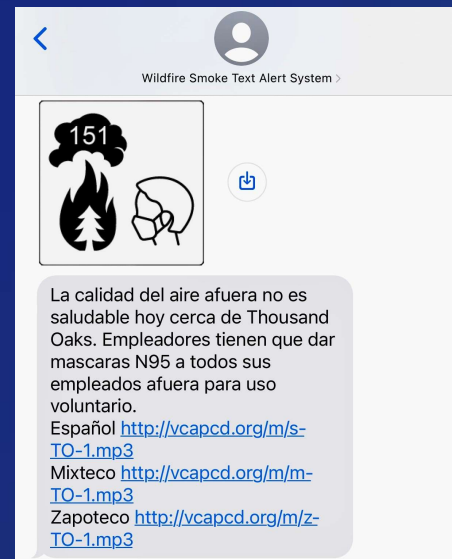Control District

Text Alert Messages

- Content of alert is sent as a MMS message containing
  - Text of alert with link to audio message accompanied by a JPEG graphic

AQI reaches 151

- English 🔊

AQI reaches 151

- Spanish 🔊

- Mixteco 🔊

- Zapoteco 🔊

Text Alert Messages

- Content of alert is sent as a MMS message containing
  - Text of alert with link to audio message accompanied by a JPEG graphic

AQI exceeds 500
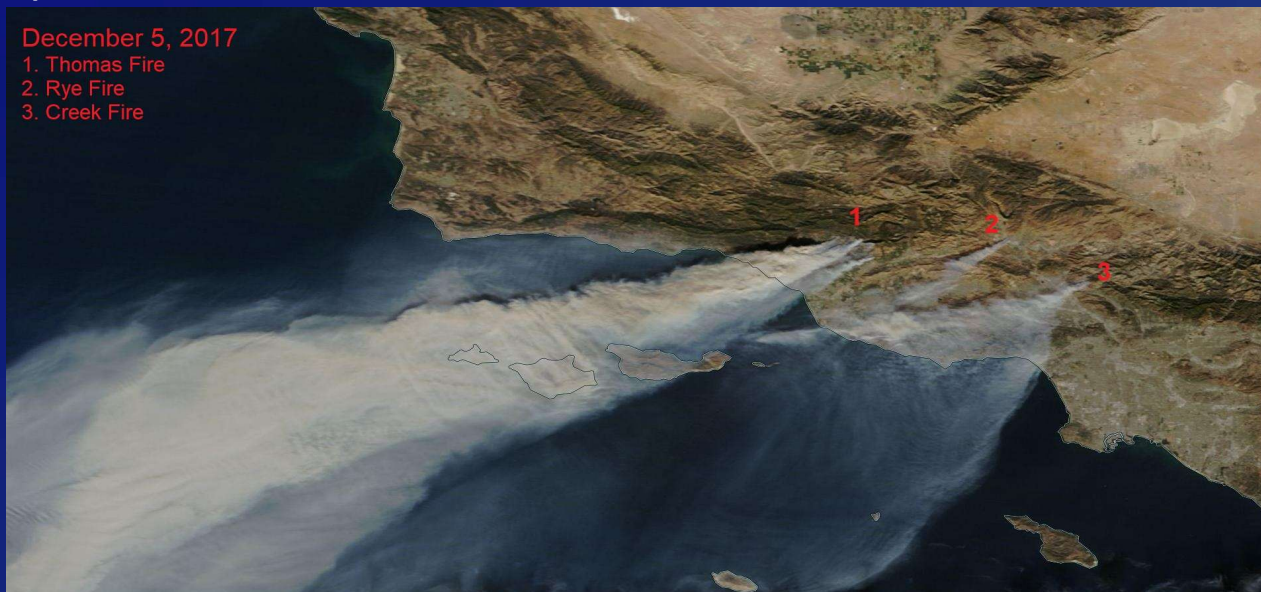

- English 🔊

AQI exceeds 500

- Spanish 🔊

- Mixteco 🔊

- Zapoteco 🔊

Text Alert Messages cont.

- Alerts will be sent once per day to all zones where air quality deterioration due to wildfire smoke causes AQI values for PM 2.5 to exceed Cal OSHA specified levels
  - Messages will be sent daily until AQI values for PM 2.5 fall below alert criteria
- Multiple messages per day will be sent if conditions worsen or alert zones need to be expanded.

December 5, 2017
1. Thomas Fire
2. Rye Fire
3. Creek Fire

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District

How to Check Air Quality

- Use the EPA website www.airnow.gov or their respective app if available on your phone

- It can be a good idea to wear a N95 mask at lower AQI levels to reduce exposure, especially for those with medical conditions such as asthma or heart problems, etc.

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District

Additional Notifications

- Partnerships between The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, non-profit organizations and the County of Ventura Farmworker Resource Program have been created to assist the indigenous farm working community to provide audio versions of the text alerts

- During wildfires, air quality alerts are communicated through:
  - Twitter (@vcapcd)
  - Website: www.vcapcd.org
  - And in partnership with The National Weather Service

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District

Thank You

- We are happy to produce a helpful tool for our agricultural community.
    - CCR §5141.1: https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5141_1.html
- More information can be found on our website at:
    - English: www.vcpacd.org/smoke
    - Spanish: www.vcapcd.org/humo

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District