



NEWS RELEASE

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City of Santa Rosa Restores Water Quality, Lifts Water Quality Advisory for Fire-Impacted Fountaingrove Neighborhood

Santa Rosa, CA – Today, the City of Santa Rosa began notifying residents in the fire-impacted neighborhood located in the water quality advisory area of Fountaingrove that the 11-month-long advisory for that area has been lifted. Residents living in the advisory area are being informed of the good news via notices hand-delivered to their front doors, and all property owners in the affected area will be mailed a 'Problem Corrected' notice. This notice is also being shared online through various channels including the City's website, srcity.org/WQAdvisory, and e-Newsletter to reach all who may have been affected.

"In less than a year, after quickly building a team of experts, forming and implementing a carefully phased plan of action, and taking more than 7,000 water samples, we have resolved this unforeseen and previously unknown side effect of urban wildfires on our public water system," said Santa Rosa Mayor Chris Coursey. "We sincerely appreciate the patience and support we received from the community as we tirelessly worked and devoted all of our resources to restoring water service to these fire-impacted residents."

As a result of the City's targeted repairs designed to remove the contamination from the water system in Fountaingrove, water quality has been restored, and the water continues to meet all state and federal standards for safe drinking water. The City worked closely with the California Division of Drinking Water and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on a water sampling plan to confirm that the repairs have been effective in resolving the contamination. The process included taking a series of recurring water samples from 65 locations to ensure water quality is meeting all safe drinking water standards. The sample results have allowed the City to lift the water quality advisory. The sampling plan also describes how the City will perform ongoing monitoring after lifting the advisory, to provide assurance that the water continues to meet water quality standards. To view the sampling plan, [click here](#).

Background

The water quality advisory was issued in November 2017, shortly after residents were able to re-enter the fire-ravaged area. The issue was first brought to the City's attention when a resident reported an unusual taste and odor in their water. Santa Rosa Water staff immediately investigated, and water quality testing identified fire related contaminants in the water, most notably benzene. Subsequently, a water quality advisory was issued for the affected area of Fountaingrove. To view the map of the water quality advisory area, [click here](#).

Since then, the City of Santa Rosa has been working with State and Federal agencies, toxicologists, forensic chemists, and national water quality experts to understand the precise causes and extent of the contamination, and to resolve the water quality issues created by the October 2017, wildfires.

The intensive investigation and analysis concluded that melted plastics, smoke, soot, and ash entering the water system during the fires was the source of the contamination. The City also learned that the highest levels of contamination were occurring in water service lines, the pipelines that connect the water main in the streets to a property's water meter.

Using all of the data collected, which included more than 7,000 water samples, the City performed targeted repairs that effectively removed the contamination and restored water quality to the level that the residents of Fountaingrove expect and deserve. The restoration of the water system included the replacement of the physical water system components to all 352 properties in the advisory area, including 28 blow-off valves, 8 hydrants, and 1,265 feet of water main. The total cost to repair the water system is approximately \$8 million, which is expected to be eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

For more information about water quality in the Fountaingrove area and throughout Santa Rosa, call 707-543-4511.

Additional information is also available at srcity.org/WQAdvisory, which includes an informational resource for lifting the advisory, [click here](#) to view.

About Santa Rosa Water

Santa Rosa Water is governed by a seven-member Board appointed by the Santa Rosa City Council. The City of Santa Rosa Water Department provides water and sewer service to 53,000 customer accounts and operates a wastewater treatment plant and recycled water distribution system that serves a regional population of 230,000. For more information, visit srcity.org/water, email srwater@srcity.org, or call (707) 543-4200.

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