

TITLE: An Interim Report on the Oregon Health Authority Wildfire-Impacted Domestic Wells Testing Project

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: No

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Topic: Wildfire impacts to water access and water quality Environmental Public Health Local Public Health Authorities Program Developers and Evaluators

ABSTRACT: **BACKGROUND:** In September 2020, devastating wildfires damaged and destroyed over 4000 homes, leading to tremendous property loss in Oregon. The Oregon legislature allocated funds to Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to pay for domestic well water testing for impacted households. Since February 2021, the OHA Wildfire-Impacted Domestic Wells Testing Project distributed 221 free well testing vouchers to well users. **PURPOSE:** The aim is to evaluate the number of wildfire-impacted wells with contaminants (e.g. arsenic, nitrate, total coliform, lead and BTEX) exceeding the maximum contaminant level, inform outreach and identify lessons learned. **METHODS:** To receive a voucher, well-users submit an online application comprised of demographic and well-related questions. Lab results for redeemed vouchers are sent to both the well-user and OHA. Survey answers and lab results were combined, sorted, and displayed via charts, tables, and maps. **OUTCOMES:** Of the 221 vouchers distributed, 47% were redeemed and 40% of tested wells had exceedances. Coliform and arsenic were the most common exceedances. The Holiday Farm Fire was the most identified damage-causing fire. Lane and Marion counties were highly impacted. **IMPLICATIONS:** Project outcomes can inform state and local actors on wildfire impacts among domestic well communities, as well as identify program strengths and limitations

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe the public health impacts of the 2021 wildfires on well-users and water quality in Oregon Identify strengths and limitations of the wildfire-impacted well program Evaluate the wildfire-impacted well program outcomes
