

# Early Action Plan for Priority 2 Proposed Management Zones Draft – Public Draft

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Executive Summary



**Valley Water  
Collaborative**  
valleywaterc.org

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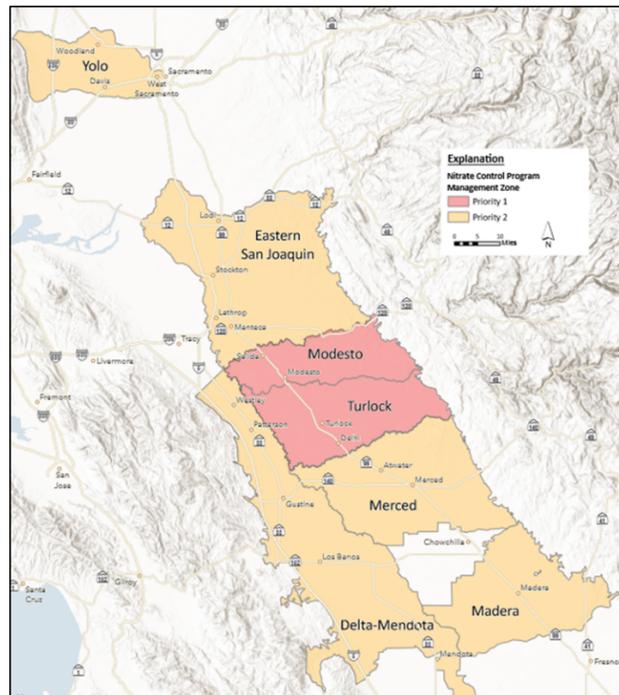
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# Executive Summary

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) is implementing the Nitrate Control Program in the Central Valley. This program is designed to achieve three nitrate management goals:

- *Goal 1* – Ensure a safe drinking water supply;
- *Goal 2* – Reduce nitrate loading so that ongoing discharges neither threaten to degrade high quality waters absent appropriate findings by the Central Valley Board nor cause or contribute to exceedances of nitrate water quality objectives; and
- *Goal 3* – Implement long-term, managed restoration of impaired water bodies.

The Valley Water Collaborative (VWC), a local non-profit organization, was established to achieve these three goals in areas of the Central Valley designated as Priority 1 under the Nitrate Control Program, resulting in the formation of the Modesto and Turlock Nitrate Management Zones. Now that the Nitrate Control Program is expanding into Priority 2 (P2) areas, the VWC has established five additional nitrate Management Zones: Delta-Mendota, Eastern San Joaquin, Madera, Merced, and Yolo. (**Figure ES-1**). VWC is managed by a 12-member Board of Directors representing local cities and industry operating in the basin including agriculture, dairies, poultry facilities, wineries, and food processors.



**Figure ES-1. Location of the VWC Proposed Priority 2 Management Zones**

Establishment of Management Zones required the preparation of an Early Action Plan (EAP) that identifies initial actions the VWC will carry out to address drinking water being used by residences in the basin with unsafe nitrate levels. The key element of this EAP, which was developed in collaboration with the community, is the Interim Replacement Water Program (Program). This Program provides immediate alternative sources of drinking water for residences that depend on groundwater that contains unsafe levels of nitrate used for drinking and cooking (water with more than 10 milligrams per liter nitrate as nitrogen (mg/L-N)).

This EAP provides detailed information on:

- The nitrate problem in the proposed P2 Management Zones;
- How residents can be involved in its implementation; and
- How the VWC can assist a residence if a drinking water source is found to have unsafe levels of nitrate.

The VWC has identified the areas in the proposed P2 Management Zones where nitrate levels are most likely to be  $> 7.5$  mg/L-N (see orange and red areas in **Figure ES-2**).<sup>1</sup> Implementation of the EAP will initially focus on these high-risk areas. However, anyone in the proposed P2 Management Zones may request that the VWC test their well to determine if their water has unsafe nitrate levels.

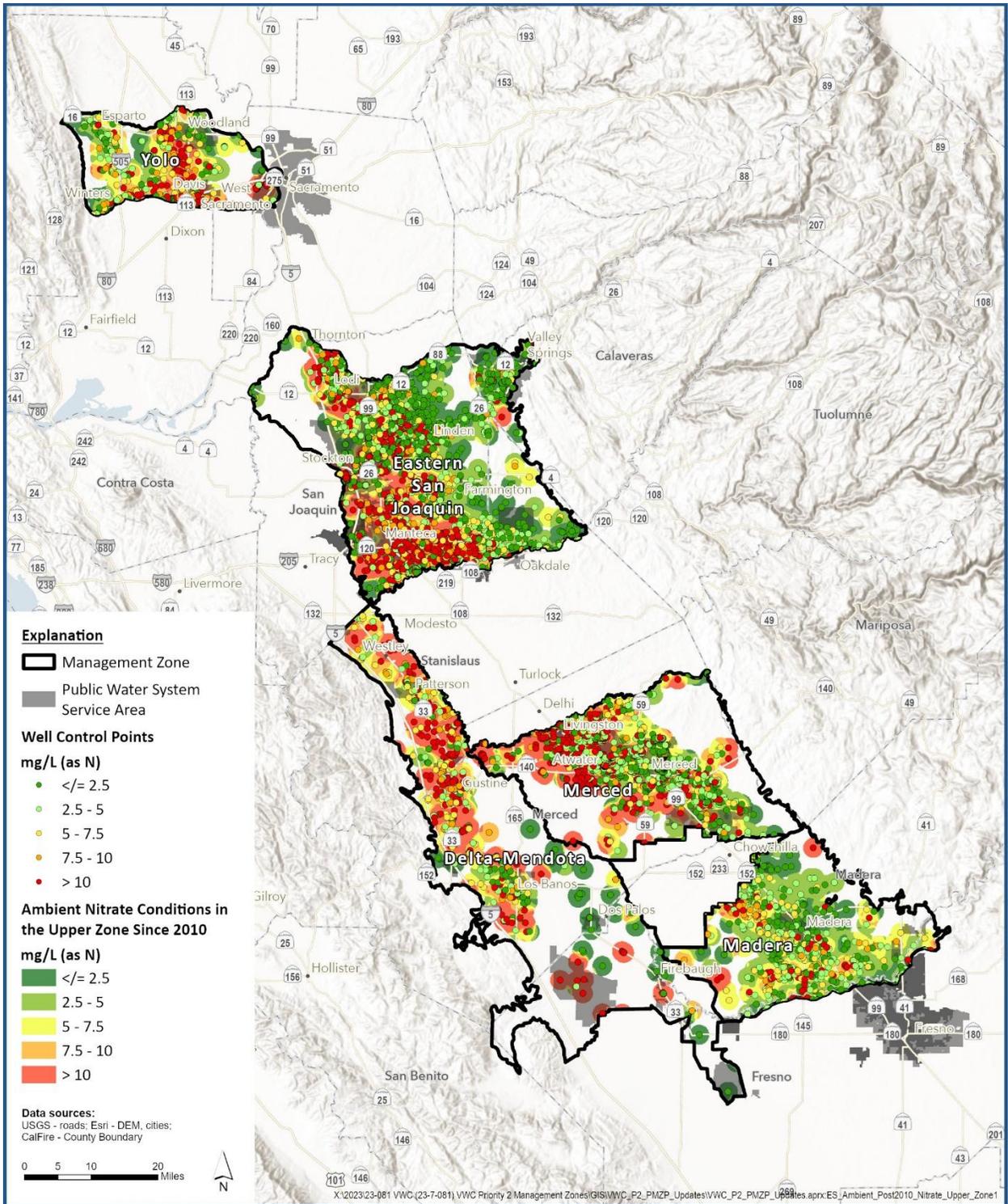
This Program provides an immediate solution for those currently experiencing unsafe levels of nitrate in their drinking water source. However, these solutions are only temporary and will eventually be replaced by long-term, permanent solutions.

There are several options for obtaining safe water upon implementation of the Program:

- Home bottled water delivery; and
- Installation of a Point-of-Use (POU) treatment system in your home; or
- Local fill station to fill water bottles, which may be available in the future.

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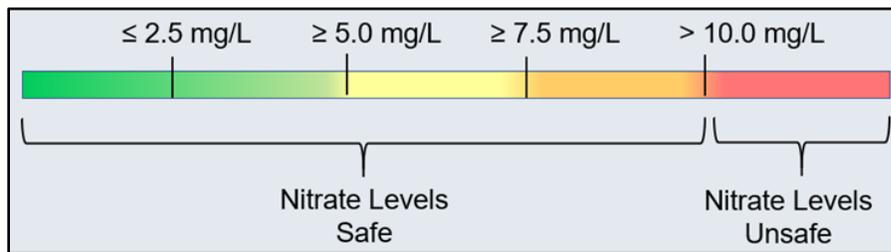
<sup>1</sup> Areas are based on best available groundwater nitrate data compiled and analyzed for Upper Zone wells with samples between January 2010 and October 2025. These areas are subject to change as more Upper Zone nitrate data become available.



**Figure ES-2. Areas in the VWC Priority 2 Proposed Management Zones where Nitrate Levels in Groundwater Are Most Likely To Be > 7.5 mg/L-N (Orange and Red Areas) (Note: This map is subject to change as more Upper Zone nitrate data become available)**

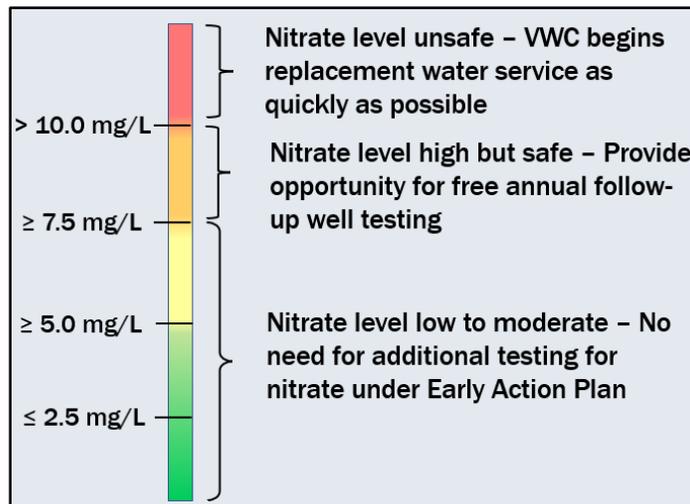
A residence located in a proposed P2 Management Zone may receive bottled water delivery or installation of a POU treatment system if a resident can answer yes to the following three statements:

1. My home is in a proposed P2 Management Zone (Delta-Mendota, Eastern San Joaquin, Madera, Merced, or Yolo);
  - a. For residents requesting service that receives drinking water from a Public Water System (PWS) that is non-compliant with the nitrate drinking water standard, where appropriate, the VWC will prioritize and target those that rely on domestic wells, and for the PWSs, will evaluate on a case-by-case basis the role of the Management Zone.
2. I am willing to sign an agreement with the service provider; and
3. My well has unsafe nitrate levels ( $> 10 \text{ mg/L-N}$ ) (see **Figure ES-3**) as determined by a water quality analysis conducted by a certified laboratory.



**Figure ES-3. Scale Showing Nitrate Safe and Unsafe Levels**

If the resident does not know if their well water has unsafe nitrate levels, contact the VWC. A VWC representative will test the well at no cost to the resident. Results from the nitrate test, which will be provided to the resident, determines the next steps as shown in **Figure ES-4**. If nitrate levels are unsafe the VWC will work immediately with the resident to obtain a safe source of drinking water. If nitrate levels are high but safe the VWC is offering to test the well the following year.



**Figure ES-4. Nitrate Results and VWC Follow-Up Actions**

VWC began holding community meetings in Summer 2024 to obtain input on the development of this EAP. Community meetings will continue during implementation to gain further input from residents on temporary solutions included in the Program and development of long-term drinking water solutions.

To support its community outreach efforts, the VWC established the following platforms to share information about the Program. Members of the community are encouraged to sign up on VWC's email list to receive Program updates and invitations to community meetings.

- VWC website: <https://valleywaterc.org/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Valley-Water-Collaborative-340350387401852/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/valleywatercollaborative/>

The Program launched in late February 2025 and allowed residences in the Management Zones to apply for well testing and replacement water on the VWC website. Anyone who signs up will be included on the VWC email list to receive community notifications. Residents with any questions or concerns about the EAP may contact VWC by phone at (209) 750-3867 or by email at [contact@valleywaterc.org](mailto:contact@valleywaterc.org). For any residents needing translation services, access to bilingual staff will be available and additional language resources will be provided as needed.