



**Public Health Department**

**Environmental Health**

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To: All Interested Parties

From: Elaine McSpadden, Butte County Public Health, Environmental Health Division Director

Re: Benzene water testing for wells affected by the Camp Fire

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As part of the Camp Fire rebuild process, Butte County Public Health (BCPH) has required property owners to utilize a certified lab to test for Benzene contamination if they rely on a well as their water source. This requirement was based on the concern that plastic plumbing in the structure, water service lines and possibly well casings may have emitted Benzene during the heat of the fire and thus was able to backflow into the well contaminating the well casing and the aquifer.

In review of all submitted water samples, BCPH has found that of all the results received only one had a detectable level of Benzene in it, and this was at a level that did not exceed safe drinking water standards.

Benzene is a volatile organic compound that dissipates in the atmosphere over time. Based on current evidence and our understanding of this chemical, as well as the passage of over a year and a half, BCPH finds that the risk of Benzene being in any Camp Fire affected well at levels exceeding the drinking water standards is very small. Therefore, effective immediately, BCPH no longer requires that sampling be completed for Benzene in wells that were located in the Camp Fire burn scar. Homeowners concerned that their well water may be contaminated with Benzene, should contact a state certified lab about having the well water sampled.

The requirement to provide water samples to test for coliform bacteria for all wells damaged by the Camp Fire remains in place. The removal of benzene does not mean that well water is safe from other contaminants, more information on well sampling and water quality considerations is available on our website: <http://www.buttecounty.net/ph/Environmental-Health/DrinkingWater/WaterSampling>