



For Immediate Release

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**Salinas Valley Half Marathon Scheduled for This Saturday
is Cancelled Due to Poor Air Quality**

Due to the unhealthy air quality in the Salinas Valley as a result of smoke from the 45,000-plus acre Soberanes wildfire, the organizers of the Salinas Valley Half Marathon have canceled the race scheduled for this Saturday morning, August 6th.

"It is with regret that we announce this cancellation," reports Doug Thurston, Executive Director of the Big Sur International Marathon, parent organization of the Salinas Valley Half Marathon. "However, our first commitment is always to the health and safety of our runners and volunteers."

Thurston said the air quality along the race course moved into the "Unhealthy" range overnight Tuesday following a shift in wind direction. The Monterey Bay Air Resources District expects to see elevated (particulate) readings in the next few days in the Salinas Valley. In addition, models show that the smoke plume is flowing into the area.

Thurston said the race is notifying all participants, volunteers, sponsors, vendors, and venues of the cancellation as soon as possible.

Registered runners will have the option of deferring their entry to the 2017 Salinas Valley Half Marathon or receiving a free entry into this November's Half Marathon on Monterey Bay.

In addition, participants will still be able to pick up their race shirts and goodie bags at the scheduled times, this Friday afternoon from 1:30-6 p.m. at the Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital Farmer's Market in Salinas, Saturday morning from 6-8 a.m. at the Soledad Mission, or at the Big Sur Marathon office in The Barnyard Shopping Village next Monday through Wednesday.

The race will donate unused water, food, and other useful supplies to the firefighters battling the blaze.

"This fire is a tragic event for our community in so many ways," Thurston said. "We are confident the running community will agree that this was the right decision."

Any instructions to participants will be posted soon at www.salinavalleyhalfmarathon.org and www.bsim.org as well as event social media sites.