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Non-harmful algae compounds found in Santa Maria drinking water

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A small amount of non-harmful algae compounds has entered Santa Maria's water supply, city officials said Wednesday.

City officials were notified by the Central Coast Water Authority that Methyl Isoborneol and Geosmin had entered the city's water supply by way of the California Water Project — which stores and delivers water throughout the state. The city was blending its groundwater with 20-percent state water, but has since reduced the use of state water to approximately 16 percent.

The algae found in the water supply imparts an earthy or musty odor and taste. But city officials said that it does not affect the quality of the water.

City officials warn that some people may experience varying levels of sensitivity to the taste and odor imparted by algae. To combat this, officials suggest chilling or adding citrus to water for those who may experience an earthy, musty odor or taste.

The situation is not expected to last longer than one week as the impacted State water completely flows through our water system, city officials said.

The City will continue to test and evaluate the compounds in the water supply, and may continue reducing State water as needed to reduce the impact to the city's water system, city officials said.