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Canadian Wildfire Smoke Triggers Air Quality Alert Across New York

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NEW YORK — Smoke from hundreds of Canadian wildfires has prompted state officials to issue an air-quality alert for most of New York, warning that the current conditions pose health risks for vulnerable populations. The advisory, issued Monday by Governor Kathy Hochul, will remain in effect through late Monday night, with further smoke-related impacts expected to persist in some regions into Tuesday.

The alert covers a wide swath of the state, including New York City’s five boroughs, Long Island, the Hudson Valley, the Adirondacks, eastern Lake Ontario, and parts of Central and Western New York. According to state officials, pollution from fine particulate matter, tiny airborne particles produced by wildfire smoke, has pushed the Air Quality Index (AQI) beyond 100 in many areas. This level is classified as “unhealthy for sensitive groups” by

the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and readings could exceed 150 in some locations temporarily, a level considered “unhealthy” for the general public.

“New York continues to track air quality conditions across the state, and people in certain areas may notice visible smoke throughout the day,” Gov. Hochul said in a statement. State officials are monitoring conditions closely and preparing for additional spikes in smoke levels as wind patterns shift.

Health authorities are urging caution, particularly for children, senior citizens, individuals with respiratory conditions such as asthma, and those with cardiovascular disease. “Poor air quality can pose serious health risks, especially for those with heart conditions, lung diseases such as asthma, young children, those over 65 years old, and pregnant individuals,” said New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald. He advised residents in sensitive categories to limit time outdoors and avoid strenuous activity when possible.

This is the latest in a series of air-quality incidents tied to Canadian wildfires this year. During June, multiple alerts were issued across the tri-state area due to similar smoke intrusions and high levels of ozone pollution.

As of Monday, over 700 wildfires are burning across Canada, with roughly two-thirds still categorized as out of control, according to data from the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. These fires have sent massive plumes of smoke across the U.S. border, disrupting daily life and raising public health concerns from the Midwest to the East Coast.

Officials recommend the public stay informed by monitoring local AQI updates through the Department of Environmental Conservation and local health departments. While healthy adults are unlikely to face serious health effects, experts continue to stress vigilance for those most at risk.

Unless conditions improve significantly, New Yorkers may need to brace for further advisories as wildfire season continues across North America.