

Wildfire smoke affects wide areas in Canada and the United States

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Wildfire smoke affects wide areas in Canada and the United States / Photo> Times Square in New York City

New York, June 8 (RHC)-- Large swaths of the U.S. and Canada woke up to hazy skies and air quality alerts for a third straight day today as thick smoke from Canadian wildfires continues to blanket areas as far west as Kansas and as far south as the Carolinas.

New York City's skies turned a bright orange as the city recorded its worst-ever air quality reading on Wednesday. Governor Kathy Hochul called the situation "an emergency crisis."

Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York said: "It has an immediate impact on people's health: irritation to the eyes, the nose, breathing, coughing, so — and even shortness of breath. So, our message right now is going to be reiterated multiple times, because it is simply stay indoors."

Some schools in New Jersey and New York have closed their doors today, while hospital emergency rooms reported an increase in patients with respiratory issues.

Flights were grounded at airports in the Northeast as cities including Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., also experience unhealthy levels of smoke.

The worst of the pollution is expected to move away from the Northeast by Friday, though conditions may remain hazardous through part of the weekend. Health experts are advising people who need to be outdoors to wear an N95 mask if possible, to block out the dangerous fine particulate matter from the smoke. Forecasters expect the smoke to move south and west today.

Meanwhile, activists are calling on President Biden to declare a climate emergency. Scientists say to expect more events like this, as wildfires have increased due to climate change-induced droughts and high temperatures.

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