



STATE OF CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

NEWS RELEASE

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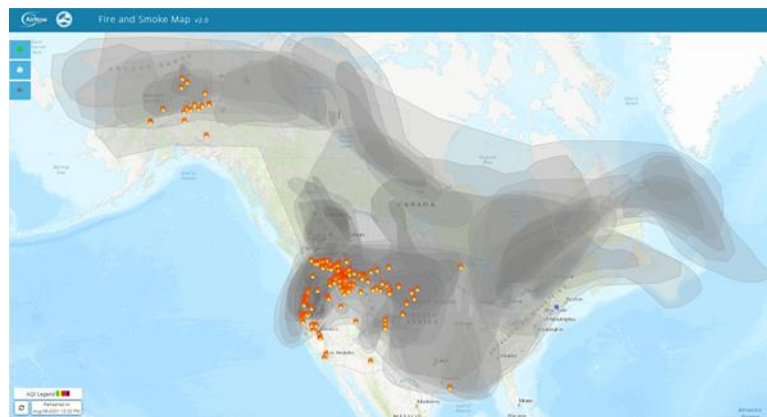
Connecticut Residents Impacted by Poor Air Quality

Hartford, August 6, 2021

In July 2021, Connecticut experienced three days with an Air Quality Index (AQI) above 100 for “fine particles” (such as those found in smoke and haze), which are 2.5 micrometers in diameter or less - PM 2.5. This level of pollution is exceptionally high for this time of year. In the past ten years, Connecticut saw no exceedances for PM 2.5 in July.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), air with an AQI above 100 is considered “unhealthy for sensitive groups”, which includes people with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children. The Connecticut Department of Public Health considers fine particle pollution to be a health concern because fine particles can easily reach the deepest parts of the lungs.

The July increase appears to be associated with the wildfires (over 90 separate active fires across the western United States (U.S.) and 242 active uncontrolled fires across Canada) that are creating smoke plumes that reach as far as Connecticut. (See fire and smoke map from <https://fire.airnow.gov/> for August 6th, below.)



“The extent and intensity of the wildfires are believed to be due to abnormally dry weather in the western U.S. and Canada”, stated Peter Hearn, executive director for the Council on Environmental

Quality. “As the climate continues to change, historically dry areas are likely to continue to experience less precipitation and increased risk of drought.”

While Connecticut residents might not think they can do anything about the fires in the western U.S. and Canada, reducing the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) here in Connecticut and globally should reduce the rate of climate warming.

“The Council encourages Connecticut residents to get involved in reducing greenhouse gas emissions”, stated Peter Hearn. “The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection lists some ways individuals can reduce their carbon footprint at [Residential Buildings \(ct.gov\)](https://portal.ct.gov/ceq)” .

About the Council

Established in 1971, the Council on Environmental Quality submits Connecticut’s annual report on the status of the environment to the Governor pursuant to section 22a-12 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Additional responsibilities of the Council include review of construction projects of other state agencies, publication of the twice-monthly *Environmental Monitor*, and investigation of citizens’ complaints and allegations of violations of environmental laws.