



**Figure 1.** Air Quality model image depicting Saharan dust transport across the Atlantic on Monday, June 13, 2022.

The Saharan dust responsible for recent Air Quality Alerts in Louisiana is the result of the Saharan Air Layer (SAL). The SAL is a warm, dry layer of air often containing dust that is transported westward by trade winds across the Atlantic Ocean from the Saharan Desert. It's most prevalent during the summer months. The journey across the Atlantic can take up to a week, which usually allows the dust within the SAL to fall into the ocean before reaching the U.S. Gulf Coast. This often results in hazy skies and pretty sunsets. But when the plume is as thick as the one currently over the southern U.S., the dust can negatively impact air quality. While ozone is often the primary air pollutant in Louisiana during the summer, Saharan dust events result in increased particle levels. As particle levels increase, sensitive groups such as those with heart or lung disease, children, and older adults are most likely to be affected. The U.S. EPA recommends that these sensitive individuals should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion during periods with increased particle levels. The LDEQ has issued an Air Quality Alert for AQI levels in the orange category through Tuesday across the entire state as southwesterly winds continue to transport dust into the region. For more information on current and forecast air quality across Louisiana, go to <https://deq.louisiana.gov/>.