



30 May 2025

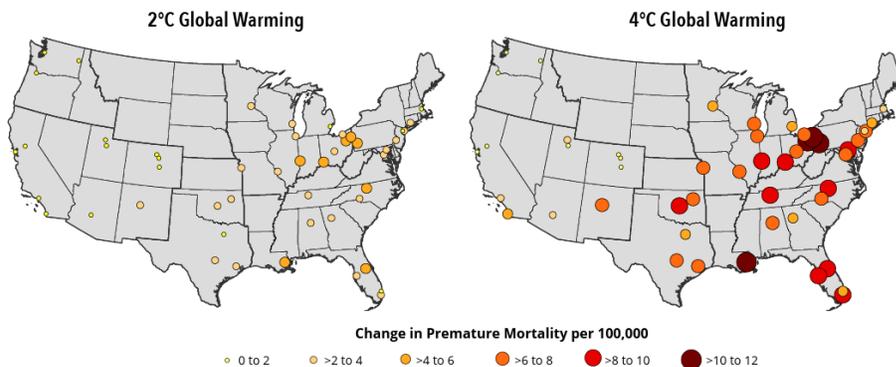
EIB 25-11 (R)- Proposed New Regulation, 11.5.7 NMAC- Heat Illness & Injury Prevention

Dear Environmental Improvement Board,

My name is Ennedith López, and I am submitting this comment on behalf of Youth United for Climate Crisis Action (YUCCA) as their Policy Campaign Manager. YUCCA is a statewide environmental and climate justice organization led by Black, Indigenous, and Youth of Color fighting for a just transition and a viable future for our communities. We are writing in support of the Occupational Health & Safety Standard with recommendations to better improve the petition to ensure the utmost protections for workers. This is a basic human and fundamental right that the state should implement to ensure the dignity and protection of workers across the state.

As the climate crisis continues to intensify and worsen, [marginalized communities](#) and working-class people in New Mexico are on the frontlines of its debilitating impacts on our local ecosystems and environment, public health, and social/economic well-being. Heat illnesses should not be treated as a personal obligation but rather as the social responsibility of employers. Ensuring the protection of our health and heat exposure is a step to creating safe working

Figure 4.2 – Projected Increase in Annual Premature Mortality Rates due to Extreme Temperatures
Levels of global warming are relative to the 1986-2005 average. Results are calculated for each of the 49 cities included in the analysis (see Figure 4.1). Importantly, cities that are not included in the analysis may still experience significant temperature mortality impacts from climate change.



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conditions for our communities, who have endured this heat without life-saving protections.

According to the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), on average, regional

temperatures across the Southwest are expected to rise by 2.5° to 5.5°F by 2041-2070, with a projection of summer heatwaves becoming longer and hotter. In New Mexico, our summer temperatures for this year are projected to be [4.1°F warmer](#) than average. The increase in rising

temperatures is not a mistake; lawmakers make an active policy decision to further incentivize polluting industries like the [fossil fuel industry](#) responsible for 75 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and 90 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions. Figure 4.2 from the Environmental Protection Agency's *Climate Change & Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impacts* report displays the projected increased premature mortality rates due to rising temperatures.

Air pollution, wildfires, and smoke will only further exacerbate heat illnesses and preventable deaths. According to the [NM Health Department](#), since April 1, there have been at least 51 heat-related emergency room visits across New Mexico. In 2023, approximately [900 emergency room visits](#) were related to heat. A just and Equitable Transition must address the mortality rates associated with rising temperatures. The heat standard provides an opportunity to act and begin saving lives now.

The NMED's proposed rules' incorporation for best practices and science-based solutions with inclusion of indoor and outdoor workers, need to incorporate heat injury and illness prevention plans, providing comprehensive worker training, preventive strategies like water, shade/cooling rooms, paid rest breaks, acclimation, and the use of trigger temperatures. If not implemented, we can expect workers to face job insecurity and lost pay because of heat illnesses. To guarantee that we are actively preventing deaths and centering workers in our best interests, the rule can be improved by:

- Requiring a standard of protection from retaliation as a part of heat injury and illness prevention plans and worker training to ensure workers and employers alike are able to enforce the standard.
- More clarity on emergency procedures is required if severe heat-related emergencies occur, so employers and workers can respond quickly and adequately.
- Ensure that exemptions for specific workplaces, specifically buildings and vehicles, have functioning cooling controls and systems
- NMED should consult more intentionally with non-managerial workers regarding heat injury and illness prevention plans.
- Requiring training to be in person, with opportunities to ask questions and re-deliver the trainings.

We cannot allow industries and private interests to undermine the devastating impacts of the climate crisis at the expense of worker safety and protection, public health, and our environment. If we continue to try to operate as usual, our communities will face serious life-threatening consequences. Inaction will further cement a cruel practice of environmental racism at the hands of the state of so-called New Mexico. We must center people over profit and act in the people's interest. We stand in solidarity with young people and workers, and we urge the Environmental

Improvement Board to proceed with the rulemaking and adopt the recommendations from advocates and directly impacted communities. We must act immediately to ensure worker safety across New Mexico.

Thank you,
Ennedith López | she/her/ella
Policy Campaign Manager, [YUCCA](#)
ennedith@earthcarenm.org