

## To Whom It May Concern:

At Equality New Mexico, **we believe that every LGBTQ New Mexican deserves to live, work, and thrive in safe conditions** — free from the threats of violence, discrimination, and harm, including from preventable dangers like extreme heat.

We write today in strong support of the New Mexico Environment Department's proposed Occupational Heat Standard. **This rule is a critical step toward protecting New Mexico's most vulnerable workers and aligns with our broader commitment to environmental, economic, and LGBTQ justice.**

Queer and trans New Mexicans — especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color; immigrants; youth; and gender-diverse community members — are disproportionately represented in frontline and low-wage industries like agriculture, landscaping, construction, and warehouse work. These workers also experience higher rates of homelessness and lack access to healthcare as a result of their Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity in the current society. This means these workers are less likely to have access to the resources needed to recover from heat-induced illness or injury. New Mexicans cannot rely upon an air-conditioned home and a visit to a PCP in order to overcome a lack of safety at their worksite. These workers often face daily exposure to extreme temperatures without The heat protection rule would help ensure:

- Clear, enforceable safeguards to reduce heat-related illness, injury, and death.
- Accessible training standards for all workers, regardless of language or literacy level.
- Required emergency plans that promote accountability.
- Reinforced protections for workers who speak up about unsafe conditions — something especially important for LGBTQ workers who may already experience job-related discrimination or retaliation.

**Industry opposition focused on cost or convenience cannot outweigh the value of human life. Worker safety is not optional. Protecting the lives and dignity of all workers — including LGBTQ workers — must be a priority.**

We urge the Environmental Improvement Board to adopt this rule and to stand strong in the face of pressure from business interests. Our state's future depends on policies that value people over profit and recognize the full humanity of every worker.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to protecting our communities.

Sincerely,



**Nathan Saavedra**  
**Director of Policy, Power, & People**  
**Equality New Mexico**