

Jay Choate

As a New Mexico resident, I strongly support NMED's proposed occupational heat protection standard. This life-saving regulation is desperately needed to protect workers across our state—construction workers, restaurant staff, teachers, farm workers, delivery drivers, and warehouse employees who face serious risks of heat-related illness and death as our climate gets hotter.

This proposed standard incorporates science-based solutions and best practices, including coverage for both indoor and outdoor workers, required Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Plans, comprehensive training, and common-sense preventive measures like water access, shade, paid rest breaks, and proper acclimatization.

While I strongly support this rule, I encourage NMED to strengthen it by:

Requiring anti-retaliation protections in HIIPP plans and training, referencing existing New Mexico laws

Clarifying emergency procedures for heat stroke and severe heat illness

Closing exemption loopholes to ensure mechanical cooling exemptions only apply when systems are actually functioning

Including worker input in HIIPP development since frontline workers best understand workplace dangers

Requiring in-person training with opportunities for questions and mandatory retraining after incidents

New Mexico workers deserve protection from preventable heat-related injuries and deaths. Industry opposition should not prevent our state from leading on worker safety. Please adopt this standard without delay.