

Catherine Day, PhD

Heat related illness and death already substantially limit the health and well-being of New Mexican workers indoors and outdoors. Research indicates that heat-related illness and death is expected to be the most common morbidity and mortality associated with climate change as temperatures continue to rise.

As a researcher on climate change impacts on farmers and farming, I am particularly aware of the impacts of higher temperatures on farmers and farmworkers, who may spend all day in unrelieved hot and sunny conditions. However, food workers in poorly ventilated indoor spaces are also likely to suffer during heat events.

As one of the states experiencing the greatest extremes of heat, it is thus imperative that New Mexico develop heat standards to keep workers safe and to limit the strain on health services and employers. Rest breaks, provision of cool water and electrolytes, adequate shade, heat-safe PPE, and attention to indoor air temperatures are all vital steps to take to protect workers in New Mexico. Please take steps to protect the future of New Mexico's workers.