

Carol Sassaman

Dear New Mexico Environment Department and Environmental Improvement Board,

I am asking you to protect the people who keep New Mexico running.

Too many New Mexicans are getting sick – or worse – from doing their jobs in the heat. At least 250,000 workers in our state are at high risk for heat-related illness. As temperatures keep rising and heat waves become more common, so do emergency room visits and hospital stays for heat-related conditions.

Heat illness injuries are serious threats. Working in the heat can cause immediate problems like heat stroke or accidents, and it can lead to serious, long-term health problems with the heart, lungs, and kidneys. Heat can even cause death. It doesn't have to be over 100 degrees to be dangerous. Workers can get sick when it's in the 80s, especially if they don't have enough water, rest, or shade.

We often think of outdoor workers in construction, oil and gas, and agriculture, but indoor workers are also at risk in hot kitchens, poorly ventilated buildings, and places with broken or inadequate cooling systems.

New Mexico can't wait for the federal government to act. We need our own rule to protect workers from extreme heat now – one that gives employers clear steps to follow and gives workers the training they need and the right to speak up if they aren't safe.

New Mexicans work hard for their families, for their communities, and for our state. Let's give them the protection they deserve to stay safe at work.

Please support a strong heat protection rule for New Mexico workers.

Thank you,