

# Kara Roanhorse

Dear Members of the Environmental Improvement Board,

As an Indigenous person who calls New Mexico home, as my people have since time immemorial, I'm writing today out of deep concern for the well-being of our workers—our relatives, neighbors, and the people who help keep this state going day in and day out. I'm asking you to support the proposed rule for heat illness and injury prevention.

For many of us, working under the sun and in harsh conditions isn't just a job—it's how we provide, how we survive. But it shouldn't come at the cost of our health or our lives. We are seeing too many of our people—especially those working outdoors, in kitchens, warehouses, and oil fields—getting sick, passing out, or worse. I've heard stories and witnessed firsthand the toll that long hours in extreme heat can take on someone who's just trying to make ends meet.

The truth is, climate change is making our summers hotter and longer. It's not just a future problem. It's here. And our bodies, our communities, and our systems aren't built to carry this burden alone.

This rule matters because it recognizes what we already know in our bones: that care, water, rest, and shade aren't luxuries—they are necessary protections and rights we must uphold. This regulation would make it clear that workers have the right to cool off, hydrate, and take breaks without fear. It gives employers guidance, and it gives workers a voice.

And I want to be clear: this isn't just about laws and policies. It's about the kind of values we live by in this state. We say we care for our people. Now is the time to show it by adopting this rule and making sure every worker—no matter what job they hold and who they are—has the protection they need and deserve.

I implore you all to lead with care and responsibility. Let's act now before we lose more lives.

Very best,  
Kara Roanhorse