

## Karen Wennberg

I'm writing in support of the proposed Heat Illness and Injury Prevention Rule. There are over 247,000 New Mexican workers at risk of heat-related illness or injury every summer. A significant portion of our workforce are in vital industries: oil and gas, utilities, trades, transportation, construction, and farming: these are our people who are most at risk and are the ones responsible for maintaining societal infrastructure. A state heat standard would set clear rules to protect workers, including breaks, water, shade, training and safety plans. 7 other states have already adopted Occupational Heat Safety Standards, including Colorado to our north.

Why is it that over 140 New Mexico workers filed complaints about dangerous heat on the job, in less than a year? These worksite issues should be addressed. Considering the concerns coming from other commentary on this rule, I think that feedback cycles and editing will be necessary to adapt the Rule to incorporate the specific needs of New Mexico.

Heat related issues strain our workforce and healthcare systems and reduce productivity. When employees are kept safe in their work environment, there are less absences, use of sick leave, and employee turnover (which is expensive and counterproductive to businesses). There is evidence that more frequent rest and hydration periods during high heat supports worker health while also increasing productivity (<https://laislanetwork.org/>). I believe that investing in the safety and health of the workforce is the responsible and financially wise choice.