



190 West Ostend St., #201
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410.547.1515
Fax: 410.837.5436

Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
HB 722 – Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health - Heat Stress Standards
Economic Matters
February 25, 2020
Support

AFSCME Council 3 supports HB 722. This legislation requires the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to adopt regulations, on or before October 1, 2022, that include establishing heat stress levels. It also establishes employer requirements, including developing and implementing heat-related illness prevention plans for employees.

AFSCME Council 3 represents many workers who would benefit from this legislation: mechanics, housekeepers, employees who work building and servicing our roads and bridges. Often the most dangerous situations can be the ones not as obvious: working in a poorly ventilated shed during a hot summer's day; cleaning in a building that is normally vacated during the summertime; working in a basement next to an aging boiler.

According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, across the country between 1992-2017 815 workers have died, and an additional 70,000 have been seriously injured by heat stress. This is likely an undercounting, as often the signs and symptoms of heat stress are misdiagnosed.

To date California, Minnesota and Washington State – and the U.S. Military – have established standards for heat exposure. With global warming and climate change being readily felt in our state (60 degree days in January!), it's clear that Mother Nature is ratcheting up the heat – Maryland needs to respond with a common sense plan to prevent heat-related illness and injuries before they happen.

On behalf of the working men and women who would most benefit from this legislation, AFSCME Council 3 asks for a favorable report.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation.
An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
800.492.1996

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