



**International Association of Sheet Metal, Air,
Rail & Transportation Workers,
Local Union 100— Sheet Metal Division**
Affiliated with AFL-CIO

Richard D. LaBille, III
Business Manager/President
Russell K. Robinson
Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Dear Chairman Derek Davis,

On behalf of SMART Local Union 100's Members, I'm writing to offer support for HB 722. Heat stress is a significant problem for our members. We Represent 2100 plus members in the State of Maryland. They mostly work in skilled building trades construction industry. They work outdoors and indoors; this can be a two-fold problem. When working outdoors our members must endure the heat, humidity and direct sun eight hours a day with very little shade. When working indoors, especially in the summer, there is no conditioned air or air movement at all. Therefore, they must endure high temperatures and stifling air eight hours a day.

As the summers have gotten hotter and we experience more days above 90F or 100F, our members must cope with hazards associated with these extreme temperatures. Maryland normally has about 25-30 days/year with temperatures above 90F but this is expected to rise to 70 to 80 days a year in the next 25 years. Sixty workers died in the US in 2018 from extreme temperatures, a dozen of whom worked in construction. Nine Maryland workers died from heat stress since 1992. Over 17,000 US workers reported heat-related illnesses in 2018 that caused them to miss work (over 2,500 of them were in construction). Yet leading experts believe that there is rampant under-reporting of heat-related illnesses in the US and that extreme exposure takes a toll in long-term health outcome and productivity.

Trends in protecting workers from extreme heat in union construction firms are good. These firms along with their unions have developed programs to help prevent heat-related illnesses, for example shifting schedules to start early in the morning and quitting by early afternoon or shifting to night work. They provide water, rest, shade and training for members on heat stress. But, smaller, nonunion companies often do not. This bill would help level the playing field and require all companies to provide equivalent protection.

Maryland being a State plan state, is required to be "at least as effective" as Federal OSHA program. But Maryland can exceed the minimum standards required. Maryland was one of the first states to protect workers from lead exposure on the job and one of the few states which require protection for tree care workers. Currently there are three other states (CA, WA, and MN). Maryland can join these states to once again become a leader in worker protection. Currently Maryland can only cite employers for heat stress under the "general duties clause" which mandates that employers provide a workplace "free of recognized hazards." The General Duty Clause though is notoriously difficult to enforce. Having a separate requirement specific for heat stress will help clarify an employer's obligations and make it easier for the State to enforce these requirements.

We therefore urge you to support this bill and look forward to working with Maryland OSHA to develop and enforce the standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Killeen", with a long, sweeping underline.

Thomas Killeen

Bus. Rep./Legislative Dir.

SMART Local Union 100