



Communications
Workers of America
Local 2108 AFL-CIO
10782 Rhode Island Avenue
Beltsville, Maryland 20705

Office Phone 301-595-2108
Fax 301-595-2412
www.cwalocal2108.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 434

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT - OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH - HEAT STRESS STANDARDS

February 20, 2020

TO: Hon. Delores Kelley, Chair, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Marilyn Irwin, President CWA Local 2108

Senator Kelley and Senate Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the 1700 CWA members I represent, I am writing to express my strong support of S.B. 434. Employees who work outdoors and indoors in non-air conditioned spaces are often exposed to excessive heat to a degree that can threaten their health and their life. These dangerously hot environments affect thousands of Maryland workers, and can put them at dire risk of serious illnesses such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat rash and even death, all of which are preventable.

In addition to my members who work in Telecommunications, those who work in Transportation, Roadwork, Landscaping, Sanitation, Manufacturing, Commercial Laundries, Construction, Firefighting, Airline Ground Service Workers and other Utility Workers are at risk.

Because Federal OSHA has no regulations that require employers to protect their employees from heat stress, we need the Maryland General Assembly to direct Maryland OSHA to promulgate a heat stress rule, which would require employers to implement heat stress plans on their worksite. These plans could include training, paid breaks, providing water, monitoring worker exposure to heat, and maintaining records on heat injuries and precautions taken to prevent them.

Per Maryland Department of Health documents, heat-related deaths are on the rise. There were 8 heat-related deaths in Maryland in 2014, a number which rose to 28 in 2018. S.B. 434 will provide common sense legislation to prevent senseless deaths in the future.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,