



March 11, 2026

The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
The Honorable Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Ray Baker, Maryland Director, Baltimore DC Metro Building Trades Council on
SB 804: Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health - Revisions to Heat Stress Standards
Position: UNFAVORABLE**

Thank you, Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and Members of the Finance Committee, for the opportunity to offer testimony on SB804. I am Ray Baker, Maryland Director of the Baltimore-DC Building Trades (BDCBT). The BDCBT's 28 affiliates represent more than 30,000 union construction workers across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The BDCBT cannot support SB804 and asks respectfully that you do not either. This legislation is regressive for workers and jeopardizes the safety of those who work in outdoor conditions or conditions otherwise exposed to extreme heat. This affects many workers who do vital and essential work for the state including construction workers, at work on state funded projects. Those workers rely on elected leaders to protect them and work toward their safety and this bill jeopardizes their welfare on the jobsite.

Specifically, this bill makes several key adjustments to existing MOSH standards that threatens to harm workers. This bill discontinues required rest periods when heat indices reach or exceed 90 and 100 degrees respectively. The alteration allows employers the discretion to determine work and rest schedule without minimum requirements. This unfairly incentivizes employers to press workers in unsafe working conditions and incentivized workers to push beyond healthy and acceptable limits leading to heat related illness. Additionally, the bill reconfigures the threshold for heat illness protection moving from heat index as a gauge, to ambient temperature. This is unacceptable because the heat index is significantly more effective in judging the heat and its effect on the body. Maryland, as a mid-Atlantic state is notoriously humid and the difference between an ambient ("dry-bulb temperature") and the heat index can be key in determining the likelihood of a heat related illness. Finally, SB804 only calls for heat related retraining if a workers were to suffer a heat related illness at work. Previous law required training whether the incident at work was indeed a heat related illness or only suspected to be one.

This and more combine to weaken heat-related protections for Maryland workers, namely those in the construction field tasked with building the infrastructure we all use and rely on. This legislation regressively and unnecessarily jeopardizes the health and welfare of all Maryland workers at a time when climate change consistently challenges everything from our infrastructure to our energy grid, and most importantly our health and welfare. Now is the time for Maryland legislators to find ways to gird workers against the threats of climate change, not lessen protections that jeopardize a worker's life. These reasons and more lead to the BDCBT urging an unfavorable report on SB804.

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