



HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

June 20, 2022

Representative Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
(Virginia-3)
Chair, Committee on Education and
Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Representative Virginia Foxx
(North Carolina-5)
Republican Leader, Committee on
Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Representative Alma Adams
(North Carolina-12)
Chair, Subcommittee on Workforce
Protections
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Representative Fred Keller
(Pennsylvania-12)
Republican Leader, Subcommittee on
Workforce Protections
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Why It's Vital for Congress to Swiftly Pass H.R.2193, the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act

Dear Representatives Scott, Foxx, Adams, and Keller:

AIHA, the association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS), strongly encourages you to swiftly pass the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act (H.R.2193).

Each year, hundreds of workers die and thousands more suffer injuries from occupational exposure to heat illness. Despite this, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not have a standard that specifically addresses heat stress. H.R.2193 would respond to the urgent need for action by requiring OSHA to issue a new standard to protect workers from occupational heat-related injuries and illnesses. Critically, the bill would also require employee and supervisor heat hazard training.

AIHA strongly supports H.R.2193 and encourages your committee and all of Congress to pass this bill. In the meantime, we are taking action to protect workers from heat-related injuries and illnesses by raising awareness of these hazards, working with stakeholders and government entities.

Recently, AIHA spoke at an OSHA stakeholder meeting on the agency's actions to protect workers from heat hazards, addressing the agency and approximately 3,000 other

attendees.¹ In our remarks, we emphasized that a standard should utilize the hierarchy of controls, be based on site-specific criteria, and provide enough flexibility in implementation that it protects workers and does not block essential work from being done. We also underscored that the environmental criteria selected for triggering the various requirements of an OSHA heat hazard standard should be clear, such that all employers, regardless of their size or technical expertise, can readily interpret and take appropriate actions.

Prior to OSHA's stakeholder meeting, AIHA provided 22 pages of detailed comments to OSHA in response to their advance notice of proposed rulemaking on heat injury and illness prevention in outdoor and indoor work settings.²

Additionally, in April, the Secretary of AIHA's newly-created Thermal Stress Working Group spoke alongside OSHA, NIOSH, and the Migrant Clinicians Network at the first National Integrated Heat Health Information System National Meeting on a panel focused on keeping workers heat safe.³

Conclusion and next steps

Raising awareness among workers and supervisors while advancing the technical knowledge of experts are necessary elements of protecting more workers from heat-related injuries, illnesses, and death, however, they are not sufficient. **Government serves as a key piece of the worker protection puzzle.** A concrete, key next step is for Congress to ensure that OSHA issues a new standard to protect indoor and outdoor workers from heat-related hazards by passing H.R.2193, the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act.

If you have any questions about AIHA's support for this bill or other matters, please contact me at mames@aiha.org or (703) 846-0730.

Sincerely,



Mark Ames
Director, Government Relations
AIHA

About AIHA

AIHA is the association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety in the workplace and community. Founded in 1939, we support our members with our expertise, networks,

¹ <https://www.osha.gov/heat/stakeholdermeeting>

² <https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/AIHA-Comments-OSHA-Heat-Stress-ANPRM-2022-Final-APPROVED.pdf>

³ <https://nihhis.cpo.noaa.gov/News-Events/NIHHIS-National-Meeting#agenda>

comprehensive education programs, and other products and services that help them maintain the highest professional and competency standards. More than half of AIHA's nearly 8,500 members are Certified Industrial Hygienists, and many hold other professional designations. AIHA serves as a resource for those employed across the public and private sectors as well as to the communities in which they work. For more information, please visit www.aiha.org.

Cc:

Representative Judy Chu (California-27)