



HEALTHY CLIMATE
NEW MEXICO
Health Professionals for Climate Action

Preparing for Extreme Heat: Update and Opportunities

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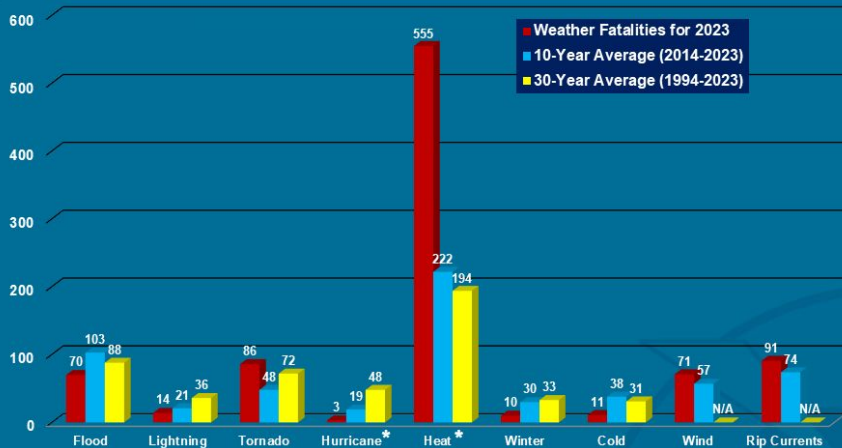
Healthy Climate New Mexico

N.M. Legislative Health and Human Services Committee

November 7, 2025

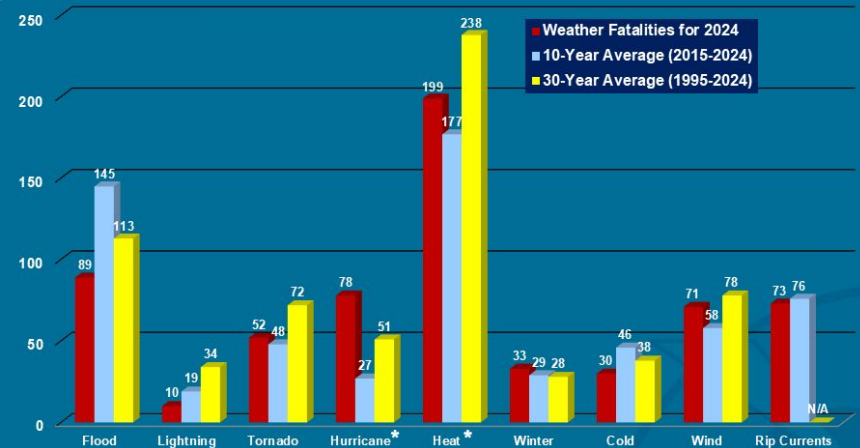
Heat kills more people than any other extreme weather event in the United States

Weather Fatalities 2023



*Due to an inherent delay in the reporting of official heat fatalities in some jurisdictions, this number will likely rise in subsequent updates.
*The fatalities, injuries, and damage estimates found under Hurricane/Tropical Cyclone events are attributed only to the wind.

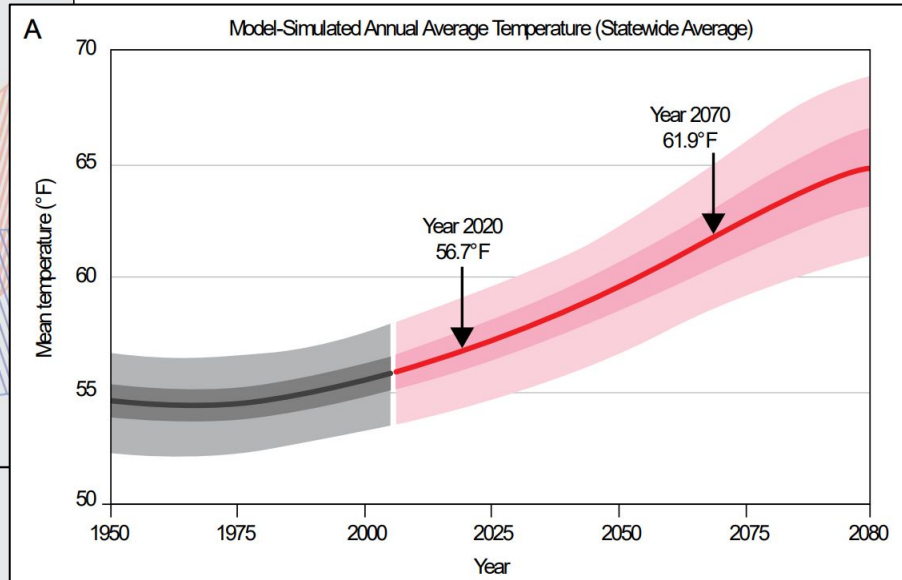
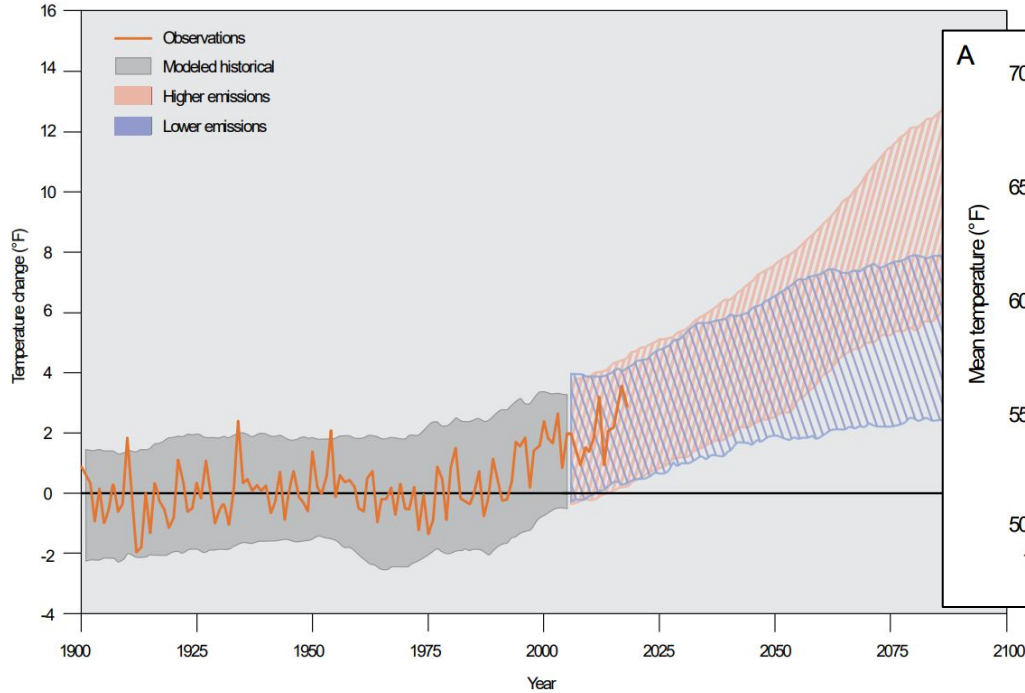
Weather Fatalities 2024



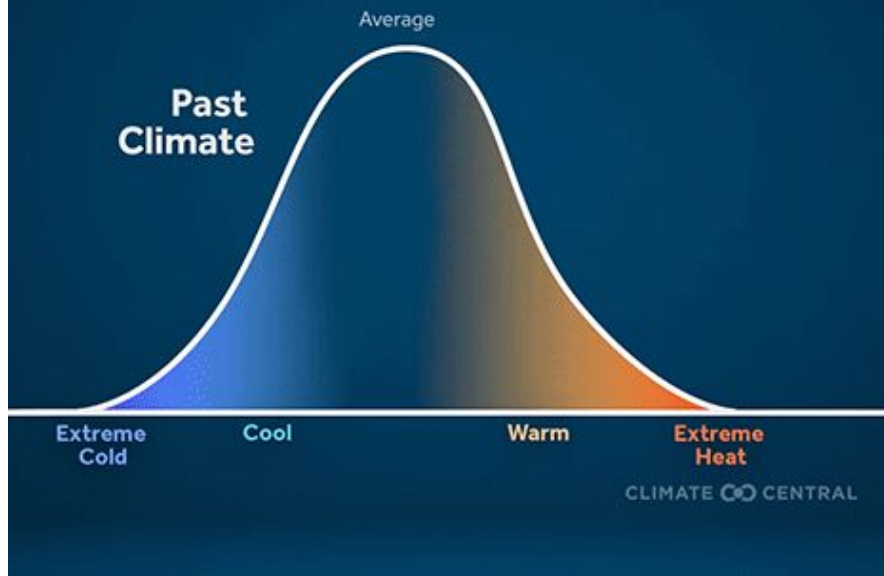
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New Mexico is on course to double our current warming by 2050 (low emissions)

Observed and Projected Temperature Change

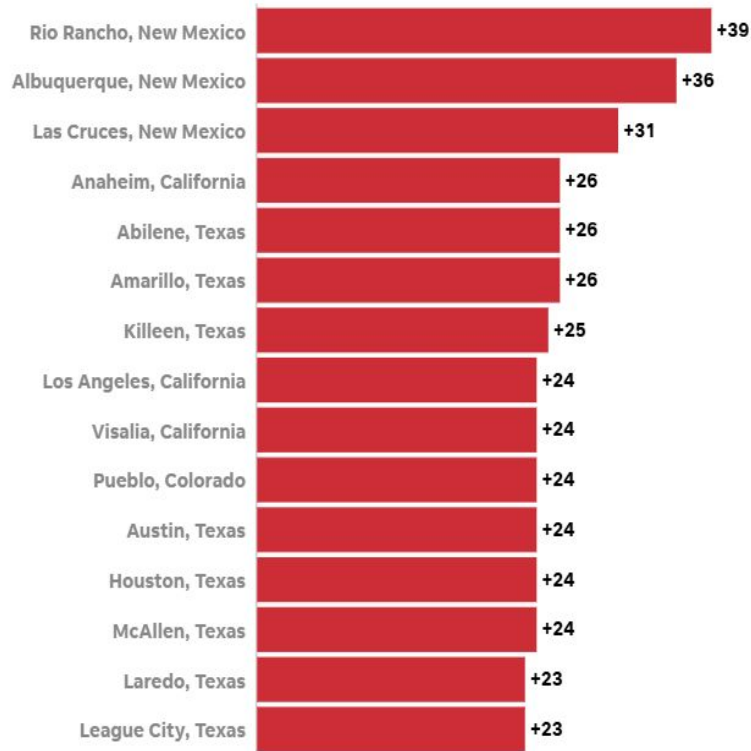


SMALL CHANGE IN AVERAGE BIG CHANGE IN EXTREMES



These cities are seeing the largest increase in high heat days

These places now experience several more weeks of days where the heat index reaches 90 degrees or higher than in 1985.



SOURCE: USA TODAY analysis of climate data from 1985 through 2024.

New Mexico is particularly vulnerable to extreme heat

- **Poverty and unhoused, substance use, mental health conditions**
- **Common chronic disease: diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease, respiratory diseases**
- **Common medications**
- **Outdoor workers and student athletes**
- **Elders (people over the age of 65)**
- **Social isolation**
- **Pregnant people and young children**

ACCESS TO SERVICES

EXPOSURE

PHYSIOLOGY

RISK PERCEPTION



Just next door, hundreds are dying each summer

SUMMARY REPORT OF HEAT-RELATED DEATHS IN 2024

977 Heat-related deaths occurred in Arizona during 2024



Around 63% of the heat-related deaths occurred in Maricopa



The rate of Heat-related deaths among Arizona residents per 100,000 population is highest among La Paz, Mohave and Yuma counties



3 out of every 4 heat-related deaths are among males



65% of the heat-related deaths were age 50 years or older



A significant proportion of heat-related deaths occurred during the months of May, June, July, August and September and over 45% of the annual heat-related deaths occurred in the month of July



Over 55% of the Arizona residents who died of heat-related illness during 2024, lived in the state for 20+ years



50% of heat-related deaths involved substance use in 2024



NM is on a trajectory to reach current Arizona summer conditions this century.

Imagine Santa Fe with the climate of Roswell, and Las Cruces being similar to Tucson.

According to the University of Maryland climate analog maps, this is the likely future we face.

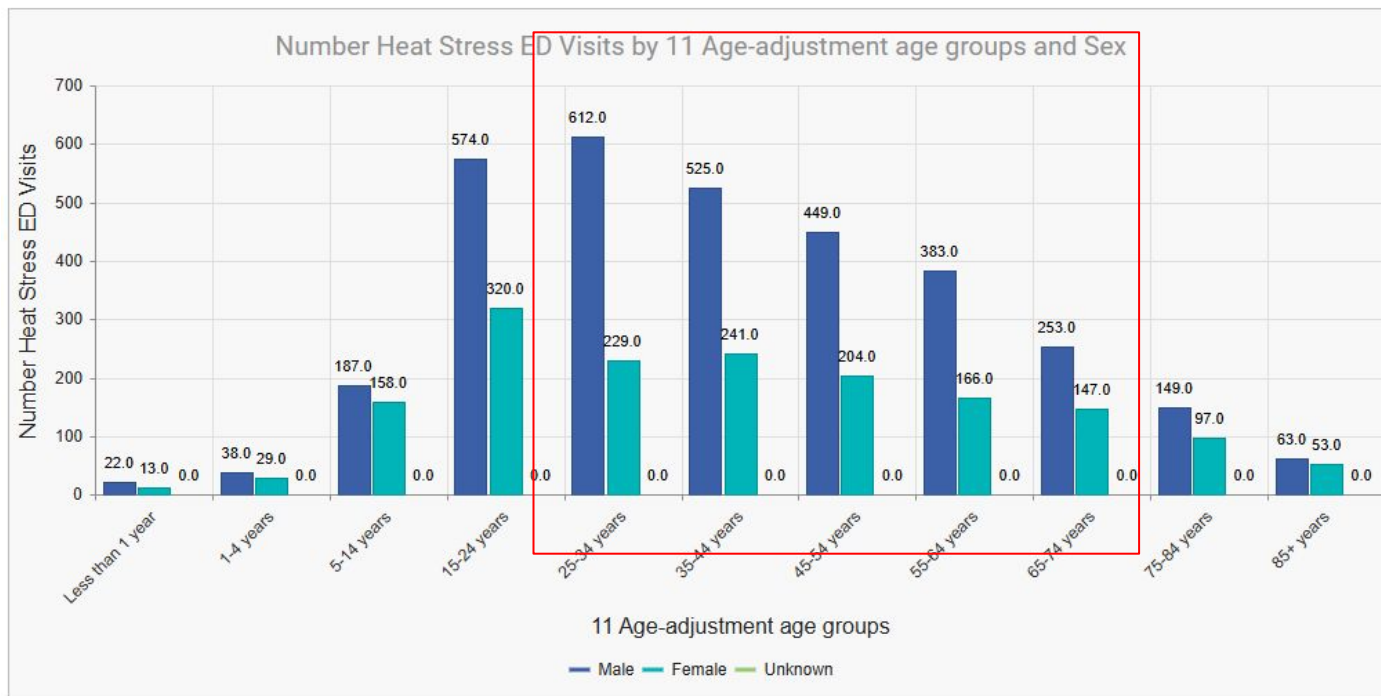
Global temperatures continue to rise year after year. The Southwest region is experiencing the fastest warming in the continental United States.

NMDOH research [shows](#) that when temperatures exceed 86 degrees, health impacts and emergency department visits increase across New Mexico. Immediate and comprehensive action is required.

Rural communities face greater isolation, slower emergency response times, less adaptive resources, higher rates of chronic diseases, less access to services, and greater healthcare costs. These factors compounds heat vulnerability.

Healthy Climate New Mexico produced a Heat Advisory to help public policy makers in our state protect the health of our people. This is available at the [Healthy Climate New Mexico website, under the “Advocacy” tab.](#)

NM emergency department visits for heat-related illness (age adjusted)



NMDOH Environmental Tracking Data, Accessed 10/31/25

<https://nmdoh-reports.shinyapps.io/HeatRelatedIllnessDashboard/>

When workers are impacted, everyone is impacted

Classrooms hot, cooling units not working at APS schools

Brittany Costello | KOB

Updated: August 8, 2024 - 11:07 PM

Published: August 7, 2024 - 8:31 PM

'Sending drivers out to die': UPS workers demand heat safety amid record temps

Union representatives around the country say they're worried about the number of UPS workers who have needed medical treatment for heat illness this summer.



Migrant worker's death prompts calls for extreme heat labor laws

As the climate warms, labor advocates say more

Indoor Workers Need Protection from Extreme Heat Too

Warehouses, restaurant kitchens, factories, and schools can get dangerously hot—but without



Preparing for Extreme Heat: Healthy Climate NM Activities 2024-2025

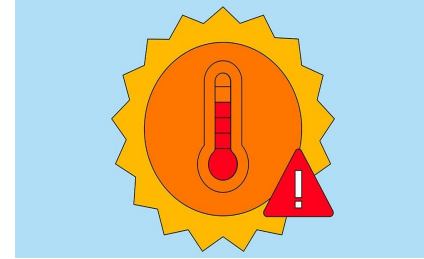
Shelley Mann-Lev, MPH



HCCNM supports the NMED proposal for a Worker Heat Protection (OSHA) Rule

Heat: The **leading cause of death** among all weather-related events in the US.

- **Research has found worse health outcomes for rural heat-related emergency service calls.**
- Extreme heat is a serious indoor AND outdoor occupational health hazard disproportionately impacting vulnerable populations.
- Workers experience lost wages, increased medical bills, and job insecurity.
- Currently no specific heat protections exist for workers in NM.



For more information see: <https://www.climateactionnownm.org/safe-work-for-all>



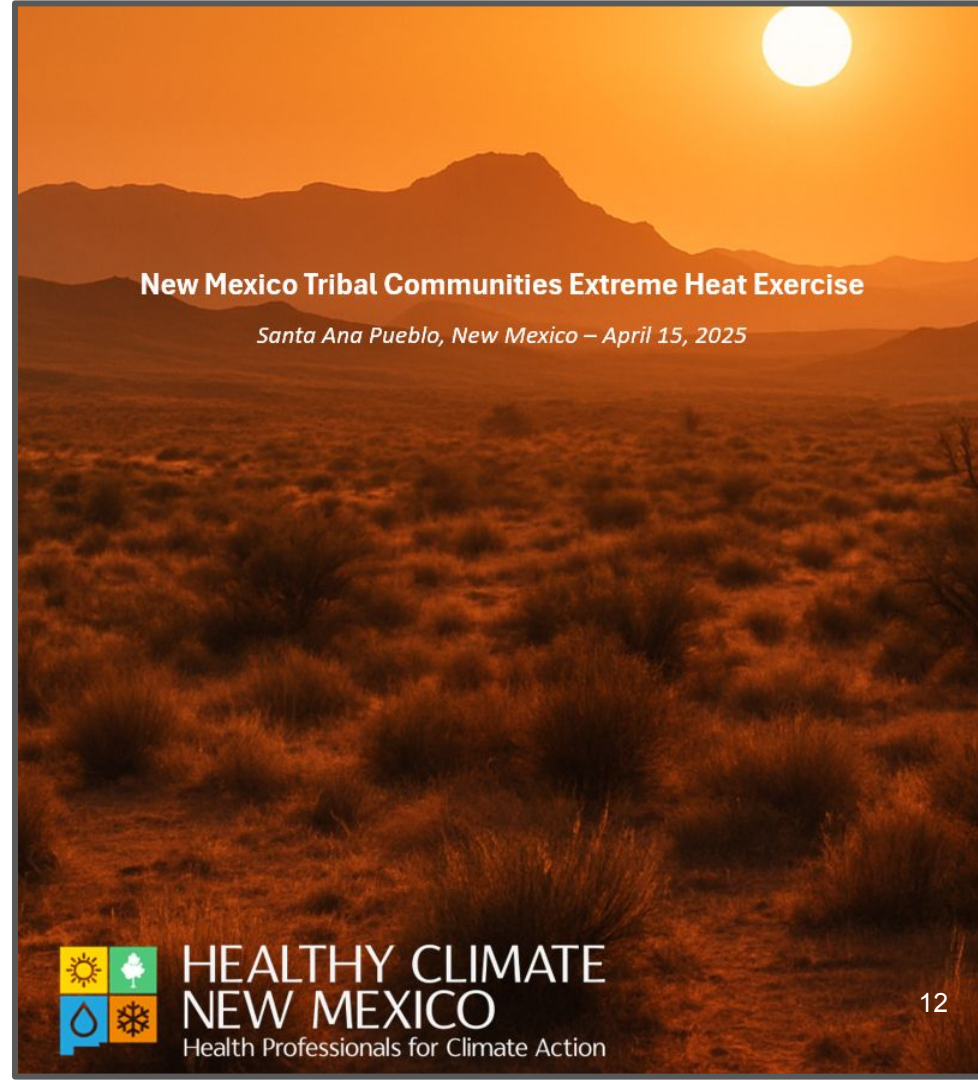
New Mexico Tribal Extreme Heat Exercise

Healthy Climate NM

New Mexico Dept of Health

Albuquerque Area Southwest
Tribal Epi Center (AASTEC)

Cornell School of Public Health



New Mexico Tribal Communities Extreme Heat Exercise

Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico – April 15, 2025



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Tribal Extreme Heat Exercise Background

Healthy Climate NM (HCNM) approached NM Dept of Health to focus on strategic heat resilience building initiatives. With leadership buy-in and volunteer support from HCNM and AASTEC, the first-of-its kind heat-focused tribal table-top exercise was developed and run at the annual AASTEC conference.

Read the full report at

www.HealthyClimateNM.org/TribalResources

- **Conducted on April 15, 2025**
- **67 participants from 15 tribal communities across the state**
- **Awareness raising about the threat of extreme heat**
- **Tested and validated existing all-hazards plans**
- **Revealed substantial gaps, exacerbated by historical underinvestment and systemic resource disparities that have resulted in limited staffing, specialized expertise, and compounding vulnerabilities.**
- **Unique strengths and challenges with clear policy implications and solutions**

Policy Findings

- State support for tribal communities with technical climate and health expertise
- Community adaptation funding
- Collaborative research and knowledge building
- Infrastructure resilience and basic service enhancements
- Culturally appropriate emergency management frameworks and information systems.

Read the full report at
www.HealthyClimateNM.org/TribalResources

Key takeaway:

Strategic collaboration among public agencies, advocacy organizations, and research institutions enables the implementation of cutting-edge resilience initiatives that deliver broad-based benefits across New Mexico.

This initiative establishes the benchmark for what can be achieved through coordinated leadership and cross-sector partnership.

Rapid Cooling Education & Protocols

Bystander Rapid Heat Stroke Cooling Protocols

*Guidance for People Experiencing Homelessness
and Substance Use*



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Upcoming Opportunities & Challenges 2026-2027

Charles Goodmacher, M.A.



Annual Extreme Heat Summit

Healthy Climate New Mexico's 3rd annual virtual summit to educate health workers and policy makers on the impacts of extreme heat. We will also provide opportunities to learn from other communities, experts, and practitioners on building heat resilience. Our first summit was held July 13, 2024, and the second summit had 300 participants!

Save the date: April 22 and 23, 2026

9:00 - 11:30 am, Virtual



Safe Work for All: Setting a HEAT Worker protection Rule

Set the Standard, Beat the Heat

- In March of this year, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) asked the Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) to adopt a statewide worker heat protection rule to protect workers.
- A state worker heat protection rule would set clear rules to protect workers, including breaks, water, shade, training and safety plans. It's common sense - and it could save lives.
- We hear the draft Rule has been revised by NMED but for some unknown reason is not yet publicly available.
- We do hear rumors that the Rule revision might allow employers and industries to adopt their own substantially similar policies, but if the health of their workers is impacted, then they would be required to implement the state OSHA Rule requirements.
- The hearing on the proposed Rule will not take place until some time after the 2026 legislative session. Follow <https://www.climateactionnownm.org/safe-work-for-all>



NMDOH Environmental Tracking Program

- Paid for via CDC funding. The CDC funding runs out in 2027, if current plans remain in place.
- Started in 2002, New Mexico is one of the first among the states!
- Only source of heat-impact data for the state.
- HCNM asks the legislature for sustainable funding to ensure New Mexico's officials can better understand the impacts of changing weather on our people's health.

NMED Occupational & Safety Administration

To protect workers while heat increases, New Mexico needs a robust Occupational Safety and Health Administration. N.M. OSHA is under NMED.

NMED currently has 16 people total in the OSHA unit - not enough for a timeline response to issues as they arise.

HCNM strongly recommends increasing the OSHA budget line, and opposes any "shaving" that might impact the unit.



Next Session: Recommendations Rising From the Tribal Heat Table Top Exercise

- Establish a state-level **climate and health program** with the New Mexico Department of Health (last year's HB108) with tribal liaison support;
- Create dedicated extreme weather **adaptation funding**;
- Support **tribal-led initiatives** combining traditional and contemporary knowledge; and
- Develop culturally appropriate **emergency management frameworks that respect tribal sovereignty** while enabling effective heat response.
- Strengthen **communication and coordination** between the state, Tribal Epidemiology Centers in New Mexico (Navajo Epidemiology Center and AASTEC), and Tribes and local communities by establishing **formal support mechanisms and collaborative opportunities to facilitate** disaster preparedness and climate-related information sharing and collaboration.
- DHSEM should **require local emergency response plans to include Heat scenarios!** The absence of plans tailored to the unique threat of extreme heat, despite the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme heat events worldwide and here in New Mexico.



Next Session: Funds for *Extreme Weather Resilience*

* For extreme heat, money is needed for implementing recommendations from the Table Top Exercise such as **installing effective cooling and air purification systems in schools, senior centers, chapter houses and other public buildings with off-grid power sources**, to allow these community spaces to act as safe shelters during the extreme weather events. Funds are needed for the **development of local heat emergency plans, cooling and power equipment purchases, transportation resources for vulnerable populations, upgrades to warning systems, distribution of heat kits, more air quality monitors and more.**

* In 2026, the measures **could be included in the next Community Benefits Fund (or other funding mechanism)** to provide much needed financial support to *local governments and tribal communities* to plan, prepare for, and respond to escalating threats.



CONCLUSION: *The health of all New Mexicans is threatened by our changing weather. State action can reduce the health consequences!*

- **Pass The Clear Horizons Act to set GHG emissions targets**
- **Fund Extreme Weather Resilience with a new Fund or as part of Community Benefits Fund**
- **Adopt HCNM's recommendations in our Wildfire Smoke and HEAT Advisories**
- **Provide support for recommendations from the Tribal Heat Table Top Exercise and other locally generated action across our state in ways that honor and respect local governments and Tribal Sovereignty and require DHSEM to require local emergency response plans to address HEAT responses.**

By working collaboratively,
we can multiply our impact and achieve great things





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11/7/2025

Healthy Climate New Mexico thanks Legislative Health and Human Service Chair Representative Thomson and Vice Chair Senator Lopez for this opportunity, and all members of the legislative Health and Human Services Committee for your work to protect the health of New Mexicans.

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