

DEBBIE DINGELL
6TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

102 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4071

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HEALTH
COMMERCE, MANUFACTURING, AND TRADE
COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER, WILDLIFE, AND FISHERIES
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

DISTRICT OFFICES:
2006 HOGBACK ROAD
SUITE 7
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105
(734) 481-1100
WOODHAVEN CITY HALL
21869 WEST ROAD
WOODHAVEN, MI 48183
(313) 278-2936
WEBSITE: DEBBIEDINGELL.HOUSE.GOV

August 20, 2026

Keith Sonderling
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

David Keeling
Assistant Secretary of Labor for
Occupational Safety and Health
United States Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Acting Secretary Sonderling and Assistant Secretary Keeling:

This letter is to express my concerns regarding the Department of Labor (DOL) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) efforts to roll back the federal workplace targeted enforcement program on heat despite rising global temperatures and a growing climate crisis.

The lack of robust federal workforce heat protections is alarming, and as the climate crisis has worsened, my concerns have grown. Heat poses a threat to workers on the job across industries outdoors and indoors and for many workers, protection from extreme heat is a matter of life and death. The past three years have been the warmest years on Earth since 1850 and in 2024, at least 530 workers were killed due to on-the-job heat exposure.¹

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has recommended heat protections for workers since 1972. Since then, the capacity for OSHA to enforce the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH) has diminished, just six states have issued enforceable workplace heat standards, and the threat heat poses to workers on the job has only grown.

OSHA has historically taken steps to enforce the "general duty clause" of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, which requires that workplaces are "free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees."² OSHA has relied on the clause for decades to cite employers for recognized heat-related hazards on the job. However, reliance only on the clause limits OSHA's ability to prevent heat-related hazards because the

¹ "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect, 2026." AFL-CIO. April 27, 2026. Retrieved from: <https://www.aflcio.org/dotj-2026>

² Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, Section 5. Duties. Retrieved from: https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/section_5

general duty clause is usually invoked after catastrophic incidents that kill or seriously harm workers.

In April 2022, OSHA issued its National Emphasis Program (NEP) on Outdoor and Indoor Heat Related Hazards, with the aim to escalate its approach to workplace heat hazards in high-risk industries.

From 2015 to 2020, OSHA conducted about 200 inspections related to extreme heat. From April 2022, after the heat NEP began, to December 2024, OSHA conducted about 7,000 inspections related to extreme heat, including 147 investigations into workplace deaths potentially related to heat. The agency issued 60 citations and sent 1,392 warning letters to employers in that same time frame.³

In April 2026, the 2022 NEP expired and OSHA announced a new outdoor and indoor heat NEP with significant narrowing in scope and accountability, including removing key enforcement targets of doubling heat-related inspections under the general duty clause. Although the April 2026 changes retain enforcement activities, it removes the former numerical inspection goal altogether and encourages workplace inspectors to focus on employer outreach and voluntary compliance rather than issuing citations. This is not only a harmful step away from strong workforce safety enforcement, but the agency already offers many employer compliance assistance programs for employers to consult OSHA for free and without penalty. The NEP also removed 46 industries from the NEP's target industries, leaving many workplaces unmonitored.⁴

Given the threat extreme heat poses to the workplace, I request answers to the following questions in a timely manner.

1. What steps is OSHA taking to better enforce the general duty clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 as it applies to extreme heat on the job?
2. What criteria were used to determine that the 46 industries removed from the April 2026 National Emphasis Program on Outdoor and Indoor Heat-Related Hazards' list no longer warranted inclusion as targeted industries?
3. How many employers seek OSHA's assistance with heat-related hazards annually through the agency's free onsite consultation program for small businesses?
4. How many heat-related inspections is OSHA currently on track to complete in 2026?
5. How many heat-related inspections did OSHA complete in 2025?
6. How many heat-related citations did OSHA issue in 2025?

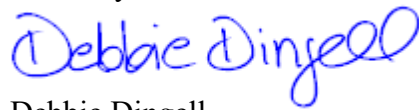
³ Dance, S. "Trump Administration Is Undoing Plans to Boost Workplace Heat Protections." New York Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/01/climate/heat-workplace-protections-osha-trump.html>

⁴ "U.S. Department of Labor Updates National Emphasis Program to Protect Workers from Indoor, Outdoor Heat Hazards." April 10, 2026. Retrieved from: <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osha/osha20260410>

7. What was the average penalty of heat-related citations issued by OSHA in 2025?
8. How does removing enforcement targets from the NEP impact the prioritization of heat-related hazards?

I am hopeful we can work together to ensure workers receive the safety on the job they deserve. Thank you for your consideration in this matter, and I look forward to receiving a response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debbie" and last name "Dingell" clearly legible.

Debbie Dingell

Member of Congress