

Investigating Safe Maximum Indoor Temperature Thresholds to Assist Heat Vulnerable Tenants and Workers in High-Risk Workplaces

Climate Change has exposed and deepened health, social, environmental, racial, and economic inequities in Los Angeles County (County). Marginalized populations in the County, including people of color, immigrants, indigenous peoples, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, the unhoused, and youth are disproportionately impacted by climate change, and will continue to face significant health threats as residents are exposed to record-breaking temperatures, extreme weather events, massive wildfires, hazardous air quality, nutritional insecurity, effects on mental health, and increased risk of population displacement. ¹

The negative health impacts of climate change are already being felt in the County: Heat-related emergency department visits have more than doubled between 2005 and

¹ U.S. Global Change Research Program. "The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States."

MOTION

SOLIS _____

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2017.² The County's Chief Sustainability Office (CSO) released a comprehensive Climate Vulnerability Assessment showing that, while 48.5% of the County's population is Hispanic, this population comprises 66.9% of the people in communities that have a high vulnerability to extreme heat. The lack of tree canopy, lack of access to park space, lack of necessary cooling devices, and/or presence of high-asphalt infrastructure in these areas inhibit the ability of these neighborhoods to mitigate extreme heat. These impacts will continue to increase in severity, frequency, and duration without meaningful and sustained intervention. The health crisis caused by climate change presents an opportunity for the County to invest in resilient initiatives that will protect health, lives, ecosystems, and businesses to reduce future negative impacts from climate change.

As County residents emerge from recent heat waves, thousands of residents are living without air conditioning. The California Health and Safety Code establishes the State Housing Law to regulate new and existing housing. Specifically, Title 25 mandates that existing rental units be capable of maintaining a minimum indoor temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit during cold weather. There is no parallel requirement for air conditioning or other cooling mechanisms to keep residents safe from times of extreme heat, which is quickly becoming more frequent due to climate change.

During the previous legislative cycle, Assembly Member Bloom introduced [AB 2597](#), which would have required state regulators to establish statewide safe-temperature standards and cooling requirements for residential units. However, the bill was amended to direct the Department of Housing and Community Development to submit policy

² Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. Hospital Discharge and Emergency Department Visit Data, prepared by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

recommendations for establishing a maximum safe indoor air temperature to the Legislature by January 2025. AB 2597 was held in the Senate Housing Committee.

Immediate assistance is needed for vulnerable tenants who lack sufficient indoor cooling and other protections against extreme heat. The County should explore targeted interventions to set its own maximum temperature requirements to protect the most heat-vulnerable tenants and workers in high-risk workplaces.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch in coordination with the Chief Sustainability Office to send a 5-signature letter to Cal/OSHA- Chief Jeffrey T. Killip, with a copy to Pro Tem Toni Atkins and Speaker Anthony Rendon, in support of
 - a. establishing statewide safe maximum indoor temperature threshold standards for residential units and workplace settings; and
 - b. requiring covered employers to develop and implement a comprehensive workplace excessive heat prevention plan to protect covered employees from excessive heat that may lead to heat-related injuries and illnesses.
2. Direct the Department of Public Health (DPH) to investigate safe maximum temperature thresholds for dwelling units and high-risk workplaces and coordinate with the Chief Sustainability Office (CSO) and other relevant Departments to identify policy options for promoting cost- and energy-efficient indoor cooling and funding sources – including leveraging managed health care plans- to assist low-income

households and small business and report back in writing in 90 days with recommendations for the Board's consideration.

3. Direct the Director of LACDA, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and other relevant departments, to assess the amenities currently present in LACDA's residential buildings and report back in writing to the Board within 120 days ~~during the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Recommended Budget with a funding plan for the installation and use of~~ with home cooling strategies and process for integrating into in LACDA's sustainability plans for residential buildings.

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