

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

September 24, 2024

**Addressing Extreme Heat for Pedestrians, Cyclists, and Transit Users**

Extreme heat is the deadliest climate risk facing Los Angeles County.<sup>1</sup> Exposure to high temperatures for long periods can cause heat-related illnesses that may require hospitalization and, in severe cases, prove fatal. From 2010 to 2019, California reported 599 deaths due to extreme heat. However, an analysis by the Los Angeles Times pins the actual number of deaths to be around 3,900.<sup>2</sup> With the severity of heat worsening, the California Department of Public Health projects extreme heat could kill up to 4,300 people annually by 2025 and increase to 11,300 individuals annually by 2050.<sup>3</sup> While heat-related illness can impact anyone, older adults, young children, and those with preexisting health conditions are particularly vulnerable.

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<sup>1</sup> Climate Emergency Mobilization Office. Heat Relief 4 LA. Climate4LA.  
<https://www.climate4la.org/heat-relief-4-la/>

<sup>2</sup> The L.A. Times investigation into extreme heat's deadly toll  
<https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2021-10-07/la-times-investigation-extreme-heat>

<sup>3</sup> California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment.  
[https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Statewide\\_Reports-SUM-CCCA4-2018-013\\_Statewide\\_Summary\\_Report\\_ADA.pdf](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Statewide_Reports-SUM-CCCA4-2018-013_Statewide_Summary_Report_ADA.pdf)

MOTION

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

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As human-caused climate change continues to alter our environment, Los Angeles County heat waves are worsening. Between 1950 and 2020, Southern California’s heat waves have become more frequent, longer, and more intense. Compared to the 1950s, our region is now two degrees warmer and expected to increase by four to five degrees in the coming decades.<sup>4</sup> These conditions are most acute in highly paved inland, urban areas with low tree canopy.<sup>5</sup> Despite existing mitigation efforts, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) anticipates, even in the best-case scenario, that surface temperatures will continue to increase until at least mid-century.<sup>6</sup>

The County has taken critical steps to address extreme heat. On July 25, 2023, the Board unanimously approved a [motion by Supervisor Hilda Solis](#), which, among other tasks, directed the County to develop a framework for establishing an extreme heat action plan. That motion complimented the County's other efforts to address extreme heat, including [establishing a maximum indoor heath threshold for residents](#), [protecting vulnerable students from extreme heat on school campuses](#), and advancing its [Room to Grow: Community Forest Management Plan to increase tree canopy](#).

Despite these efforts, heat remains an issue – especially for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. It is particularly unbearable for pedestrians waiting to cross

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hulley, Dousset, & Kahn. Rising Trends in Heatwave Metrics Across Southern California. *Earth’s Future*, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2020EF001480>; May 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2021). *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Masson-Delmotte, V., et al. (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press.  
[https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_SPM.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf)

intersections, cyclists waiting at red lights, and transit users waiting for the bus. It's common for wait time at intersections to last 30 seconds to over 2 minutes. This often forces folks to remain exposed to high temperatures for extended periods.

As we strive to improve the County's transit and active transportation landscape, it is paramount that we address issues of extreme heat. The Department of Public Works (DPW) should collect data at crosswalks in unincorporated areas and provide recommendations on implementing changes such as increasing tree canopy, installing shade structures, adjusting crossing times, and other potential solutions. By updating crossing areas, we can enhance the safety and comfort of pedestrians and take a significant step towards a more equitable and walkable Los Angeles County.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Works to:

1. Analyze commonly used crosswalks, intersections, and bus stops in unincorporated Los Angeles County and develop actionable recommendations to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat on the comfort and safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users, including providing shade and reducing wait times; and
2. Report back in writing on the above in 180 days.

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