

March 8, 2024

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Plaza Level, The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399



Re. CS/CS/HB 433, “Employment Regulations” Veto Request.

Governor DeSantis:

Sierra Club, the oldest, largest environmental advocacy organization in the nation with more than 240,000 members and supporters in Florida, urges you to veto CS/CS/HB 433, “Employment Regulations.”

CS/CS/HB 433 would preempt local governments’ ability to pass protections for workers laboring in extreme heat. You can ask any Floridian; it’s getting warmer. Preempting local government’s ability to protect workers from climate-caused extreme heat and the economy from consequent lost productivity would be a significant mistake. Communities face unique, local challenges requiring unique, local solutions. Infringing upon their freedom to do so serves nobody but shortsighted employers who see workers as disposable and big-government politicians in Tallahassee.

Out of all the threats climate change poses to Florida’s economy—including skyrocketing insurance rates and stronger storms— the impact of extreme heat on productivity is one of the largest.¹ The facts are indisputable. In 2022, heat exposure in the U.S. led to the loss of almost *half a trillion* labor hours, a significant increase from previous years.² In 2021, a report by The Atlantic Council found that loss of productivity from heat led to a loss of about \$100 billion dollars a year in the United States.³ Inaction on climate change is costly. The same report concluded that “without meaningful action to reduce emissions and/or adapt to extreme heat, labor productivity losses could double to nearly \$200 billion by 2030 and reach \$500 billion by 2050.”⁴ These impacts will disproportionately fall on the shoulders of working-class Floridians at a time when Florida is also growing disproportionately less affordable compared to the rest of the nation.

¹ Coral Davenport, “Heat Is Costing the U.S. Economy Billions in Lost Productivity,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/climate/heat-labor-productivity-climate.html>

²“Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change,” *The Lancet*, Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.lancetcountdown.org/data-platform/health-hazards-exposures-and-impacts/1-1-health-and-heat/1-1-4-change-in-labour-capacity>

³ “Extreme Heat: The Economic and Social Consequences for the United States,” *The Atlantic Council*, August 2021, 2.

⁴ Ibid, 3.

Extreme heat is already a leading weather-related cause of death and workplace injury across the country. In the United States, extreme heat was estimated to be the cause of about 120,000 workplace injuries every year, and without action that number could rise to about 450,000 per year in 2050.⁵ From 2019 to 2022, heat related deaths rose a staggering 88% in Florida.⁶ These deaths and injuries also disproportionately impact marginalized communities.

Governor, the cost of inaction on climate change is ethically and economically unsustainable. Preventing local governments from taking action will cost Floridians their paychecks and their lives. While big business and big-government Tallahassee legislators may be able to ignore that, Florida won't.

We urge you to take this threat to our economy and our workers seriously. Veto CS/CS/HB 433.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James Scott
Executive Committee Chair, Sierra Club Florida

⁵ Ibid, 9.

⁶Brandon Girod, "Heat-related deaths in Florida have increased 88% in 3 years as temps continue to rise," *Pensacola News Journal*, August 4, 2023.
<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2023/08/04/heat-related-deaths-in-florida-have-increased-88-in-three-years/70519895007/>