



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislators and Business Groups Challenge Governor to Repeal Heat Stress Rule

OLYMPIA—Yesterday, six statewide business & trade organizations and four members of the Washington State Legislature called upon Governor Christine Gregoire to immediately repeal the “emergency” heat stress rule adopted today by the Department of Labor & Industries.

“The heat stress rule is unnecessary, costly, and ill-conceived,” said Amy Brackenbury, Human Resources Analyst with BIAW. “The regulation amounts to nothing more than micromanaging harassment from government bureaucrats that is unrelated to any attempt to protect workers.”

L&I’s emergency rule will require employers to provide one quart of water per worker per hour at every outdoor jobsite. Employers will be required to train workers and supervisors about personal risk factors associated with heat-related illness, and to provide shade canopies, air conditioned areas or other methods of reducing employees’ body temperature, should any worker experience heat stress.

The Building Industry Association of Washington, the National Federation of Independent Business, the Washington Farm Bureau, the Associated Builders & Contractors of Western Washington, the Washington Association of Landscape Professionals and the Washington Contract Loggers Association, along with State Senators Jim Honeyford, Mark Schoesler, Jim Clements and Representative Joel Kretz sent a petition to the Governor requesting an immediate repeal of the rule.

Opposition to the new rule is widespread across the state because it unnecessarily adds a layer of bureaucratic traps to an existing, common-sense rule that requires employers to maintain an adequate water supply for all workers employed in an outdoor environment.

Further, L&I adopted the rule using emergency rulemaking procedures which means there was no testimony or input from businesses and no economic analysis of the rule’s impact. “Where’s the emergency?” asked Brackenbury. “Apparently the impending onset of summer caught the Department by surprise.”

The Governor has seven days to respond to the petitioners’ request and can either order the rule repealed or deny the request in writing.

(more)

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“If the Governor is serious about accountability at the Department of Labor & Industries, she’ll repeal this rule,” said Brackenbury.

Known as the “voice of the housing industry,” the Building Industry Association of Washington is the largest trade association in Washington State, representing over 350,000 families and 12,700 member companies involved in the homebuilding business.