

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 109**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez  
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia,  
Kalra, Luz Rivas, and Salas)**

August 30, 2021

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 109—Relative to extreme weather.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 109, as introduced, Lorena Gonzalez. Extreme heat: state response.

This measure would declare the California Legislature's recognition of the threat that extreme heat poses to our communities and calls on the state's agencies and departments to take immediate action to prepare and protect our communities from its impacts.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, There have already been several record-breaking  
2 heat waves in 2021 only five weeks into summer, including one  
3 of the worst heat waves in history that killed hundreds of people  
4 throughout the Pacific Northwest in just one weekend; and  
5 WHEREAS, The extreme heat waves in 2020 caused rolling  
6 blackouts that left many Californians without power for weeks  
7 and fueled some of the most catastrophic and deadly wildfires that  
8 the state has ever experienced; and  
9 WHEREAS, Extreme heat events, which pose a serious threat  
10 to public health, infrastructure, agriculture, and water and energy

1 security, are certain to become more frequent and severe as climate  
2 change continues; and

3 WHEREAS, Extreme heat is already the leading cause of  
4 weather-related mortality in the nation. The Centers for Disease  
5 Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that over 600 Americans  
6 die and thousands more are hospitalized from extreme heat each  
7 year. Further, the CDC emphasizes that its estimate is a significant  
8 undercount of actual numbers; and

9 WHEREAS, The impacts of extreme heat are likely to be  
10 magnified in California, which is already the only place in the  
11 United States where heat-related deaths occur during winter  
12 months, and where many homes lack air conditioning and adequate  
13 tree canopy to reduce ambient temperatures; and

14 WHEREAS, Extreme heat does not affect all people equally.  
15 People without homes are entirely unsheltered from the heat, and  
16 lower income communities and communities of color are often  
17 located in the hottest neighborhoods in cities across the country,  
18 where urban green infrastructure is sparse. Consequently,  
19 disadvantaged or minority communities are disproportionately  
20 exposed to the risk of heat-related illnesses and death; and

21 WHEREAS, The CDC has found that farmworkers, who are  
22 disproportionately Latino, at risk of living in poverty, and less  
23 likely to have health insurance, die of heat-related illnesses at  
24 roughly 20 times the national rate; and

25 WHEREAS, The Occupational Safety and Health Appeals Board  
26 has adopted a heat illness prevention standard applicable to outdoor  
27 worksites and additional requirements meant to protect employees  
28 working in industries associated with exposure to extreme  
29 temperatures, such as agriculture and construction. However, the  
30 board has not finalized a heat illness prevention standard for indoor  
31 workers despite documented occurrences of heat-related illnesses;  
32 and

33 WHEREAS, Heat-related illnesses are disproportionately found  
34 in industries with many lower income workers. The bottom 20  
35 percent of the lowest paid workers in the state suffer five times as  
36 many heat-related illnesses as those who are among the top 20  
37 percent of the highest paid workers, according to recent data  
38 compiled by researchers at the University of California, Los  
39 Angeles. This disparity results in both lost wages and significant

1 medical bills for affected workers, which widens existing economic  
2 disparities; and

3 WHEREAS, Children, especially those that attend schools in  
4 urban areas built with heat-retaining materials and that are  
5 ill-equipped to shelter students from extreme heat, are at heightened  
6 risk of suffering heat-related illnesses, poor health outcomes, as  
7 excessive heat interrupts outdoor activity and exercise, and a  
8 reduction in their ability to learn; and

9 WHEREAS, The National Bureau of Economic Research  
10 estimates that, absent mitigation measures, there is a negative  
11 correlation between increased temperature during a school year  
12 and student learning. This correlation impacts minority students  
13 the most because hot school days account for approximately 5  
14 percent of the racial achievement gap; and

15 WHEREAS, The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on  
16 Climate Change projects that even a change from 1.5 degree  
17 Celsius to 2 degrees Celsius in the world's overall climate could  
18 result in significantly more heat-related deaths, increased poverty,  
19 and slowed economic growth; and

20 WHEREAS, Extreme heat events contribute to and compound  
21 other climate and resource challenges, including uncontrolled  
22 wildfires and the degradation of air quality due to wildfires,  
23 drought, and increased energy demand and use; and

24 WHEREAS, Effective nature-based strategies to minimize the  
25 effects of extreme heat events, such as urban forestry and increasing  
26 vegetation through strategic management and restoration of parks  
27 and riparian zones in urban areas, not only exist but can be easily  
28 implemented; and

29 WHEREAS, Trees and greenspaces help mediate temperatures  
30 in urban areas, and have been associated with dramatic drops in  
31 heat-associated health impacts; and

32 WHEREAS, A 2015 urban forestry study in ScienceDirect  
33 examined tree canopy coverage in a particular area and found that  
34 an increase in coverage from 10 percent to 25 percent resulted in  
35 an average daytime cooling benefit of up to 35 degrees Fahrenheit  
36 in residential neighborhoods at the local scale; and

37 WHEREAS, Building resilience to the impacts of climate change  
38 is a state priority, and investments are being made to mitigate sea  
39 level rise, wildfires, and other climate-related events; and

1 WHEREAS, Extreme heat is just as deadly as other climate  
2 impacts, and failing to deploy strategies that address, mitigate, and  
3 build resilience to it early will undoubtedly result in countless  
4 avoidable deaths; now, therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
6 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes extreme heat  
7 as a serious and urgent threat; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the Legislature calls upon California’s public  
9 agencies and departments to invest resources in building resilience  
10 to extreme heat, with priority given to communities that are most  
11 at risk and vulnerable; and be it further

12 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
13 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.