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Tracking Extreme Heat Deaths

A.755B (Paulin, et al.)/S.5056B (Rivera)

Explanation:
The climate crisis is here—and it's deadly. 2023 was the hottest year ever recorded, contributing to at least 2,325 heat-related deaths across the United States. Since 1999, over 21,500 Americans have died due to extreme heat, according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. In 2024 alone, New York City reported 580 heat-related deaths. And with temperatures projected to continue rising, the toll will only grow.

The New York State Climate Impacts Assessment warns that the number of days with a heat index over 95°F is expected to surge, especially in New York City, Albany, and Buffalo. Yet despite this clear and growing threat, New York City remains the only jurisdiction in the state that systematically tracks heat-related mortality.

This bill addresses this critical gap. It requires the New York State Department of Health (DOH) to collect and report data on heat-related deaths statewide. This information is essential to shaping policies that can save lives and will build on New York's portfolio of heat-related work – including the Extreme Heat Action Plan Work Group and the Extreme Heat Action Plan.

High heat does not affect all New Yorkers equally. Black residents are twice as likely to die from heat stress as White residents—a result of long-standing structural racism that shapes disparities in housing, health care, and access to cooling resources.

Data drives action. With better statewide tracking, public health officials, hospitals, and policymakers can target interventions where they're most needed. At a time when the federal government is retreating from vital data collection, New York must lead. This bill is a crucial step in protecting public health and advancing climate justice.

Summary:
This bill directs the Department of Health to issue an annual report examining heat vulnerability and heat exacerbated deaths in New York State. Additionally, the bill expands the definitions of heat death classification to include heat-stress and heat-exacerbated deaths, ensuring that these fatalities are not undercounted.