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California Farmworkers Face Dual Threats from Extreme Heat, Pesticide Exposure

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Every summer, as temperatures climb across California, thousands of farmworkers endure grueling conditions to produce the food that feeds our state and nation. These essential workers face not only extreme heat, but also daily exposure to pesticides — an invisible but equally dangerous threat. Alarming, current regulations do not adequately account for the compounding effects of pesticide exposure and extreme heat.

It is estimated that farmworkers have 35 times the risk of dying from extreme heat compared with other worker populations, and growing evidence suggests that heat will amplify farmworkers' exposure and vulnerability to pesticides.

Further, many California farmworkers lack access to health services to address these concerns — barriers that will only continue to worsen as the state limits Medi-Cal access for undocumented individuals and the federal administration's anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies discourage immigrants, regardless of documentation status, from seeking health care.