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California State Senate

SENATOR
STEPHEN C. PADILLA
EIGHTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4 ON
STATE ADMINISTRATION AND
GENERAL GOVERNMENT
CHAIR
MEMBER
AGRICULTURE
BUDGET
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
HOUSING
NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER
REVENUE & TAXATION

SB 1105 – Leave for Farmworkers During Climate Emergencies

As the nation’s leading farm state and one of the world’s largest producers of food, farmworkers have been foundational to California’s standing as the fourth largest economy in the world. Despite the vital role that farmworkers play to California, they continue to face several disadvantages as compared to other populations. Many lack access to health care and other critical safety net services and farmworkers do not enjoy the same protections workers as workers in other industries.

Workplace conditions also expose farmworkers to several adverse environmental hazards resulting from extreme weather events that endanger their health, safety, and economic livelihood including working under extremely high temperatures, exposure to smoke from wildfires, and rain. Agricultural workers are 35 times more likely to die from heat-related stress than workers in any other industry in the United States.¹ Agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries in the United States and the rapidly changing climate will only make matters worse. In an analysis conducted by *Mother Jones* of the 168-farmworker deaths in California between 2018 and 2022, 83 of the 168 tragically lost their lives when temperatures in the surrounding area exceeded 80 degrees Fahrenheit, the temperature that triggers California’s heat safety requirements.² As average temperatures increase and heat waves, wildfires, and extreme rain events increase, farmworkers will be at continued risk of losing their lives.

While the state of California has taken some of the nation’s most proactive steps to adopt occupational safety standards related to heat and smoke, farmworkers need to know that during a climate emergency they are not risking personal financial disaster by choosing their safety. SB 1105 would require that paid sick leave granted to agricultural employees can also be utilized to avoid smoke, heat, or flooding conditions created by a local or state emergency. By allowing farmworkers to utilize their paid sick leave during climate emergencies, California can treat farmworkers as essential workers, instead of sacrificial ones, by ensuring they do not have to choose between their safety or their livelihood.

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¹ Gubernet, Diane M., G. Brooke Anderson, and Katherine L. Hunting. “Characterizing Occupational Heat-Related Mortality in the United States, 2000–2010: An Analysis Using the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Database.” *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 58, no. 2 (2015): 203–11. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.22381>.

² Gross, Liza, and Peter Aldhous. “Excessive Heat and Air Pollution Are Putting Farmworkers’ Lives at Risk.” *Mother Jones* (blog). Accessed February 13, 2024. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2023/12/heat-and-air-pollution-putting-scores-of-california-farmworkers-lives-at-risk/>.

Support

California Food and Farming Network

Californians for Pesticide Reform

California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN)

Central Coast Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

Centro Binacional de Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueño

Ceres Community Project

City of El Centro

City of Imperial

Clean Earth 4 Kids

Imperial Valley Equity and Justice

Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

Lideres Campesinas

Marin Food Policy Council

Pesticide Action Network

Roots of Change

Sun Community Federal Credit Union

The Praxis Project



Heber Public Utility District

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Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Heber Public utility District, I write to respectfully request your signature on Senate Bill (SB) 1105, which would require that paid sick leave granted to agricultural employees can also be utilized to avoid smoke, heat, or flooding conditions created by a local or state emergency.

As the nation's leading farm state and one of the world's largest producers of food, farmworkers have been foundational to California's standing as the fourth largest economy in the world. Despite the vital role that farmworkers play to California, they continue to face several disadvantages as compared to other populations. Many lack access to health care and other critical safety net services and farmworkers do not enjoy the same protections workers as workers in other industries.

Workplace conditions also expose farmworkers to several adverse environmental hazards resulting from extreme weather events that endanger their health, safety, and economic livelihood including working under extremely high temperatures, exposure to smoke from wildfires, and rain. Agricultural workers are 35 times more likely to die from heat-related stress than workers in any other industry in the United States. As average temperatures increase and heat waves, wildfires, and extreme rain events increase, farmworkers will be at continued risk of losing their lives.

The Heber Public Utility District (HPUD) provide water, wastewater services, and solid waste services to the residents of Heber. HPUD also oversees five parks and a recreation center that is open to the community. Water is treated at HPUD's water treatment plant that treat approximately four million gallons of water a day and provide potable water to 24 miles of residential home and commercial businesses.

While the state of California has taken some of the nation's most proactive steps to adopt occupational safety standards related to heat and smoke, farmworkers need to know that during a climate emergency they are not risking personal financial disaster by choosing their safety. By allowing farmworkers to utilize their paid sick leave during climate emergencies, California can treat farmworkers as essential workers, instead of sacrificial ones, by ensuring they do not have to choose between their safety and their livelihood.

For these reasons, SB 1105 (Padilla) would further the Heber Public Utility District's goal of Providing outstanding public services and innovative leadership to enhance the Heber community. We are proud to support SB 1105(Padilla)/and urge your signature on this bill.



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Best regards,

Delfino Matus, Board President
Heber Public Utility District