

FARMWORKER JUSTICE'S STATEMENT ON EPA'S WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD

Farmworker Justice is pleased that the EPA has issued an improved Worker Protection Standard (WPS) today and that it includes many important new protections from exposure to pesticides for farmworkers. Farmworkers are routinely exposed to high levels of pesticides in the fields where they work and in the communities where they live. We hope that the improved regulation will result in greater awareness by farmworkers of the risks they face, stronger protections from exposure, and ultimately, fewer pesticide-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths among farmworkers and their family members.

The revised WPS establishes a minimum age of 18 for pesticide handlers; increases the frequency of worker safety training from once every five years to every year; improves the content and quality of worker safety trainings; provides new rules on decontamination and personal protective equipment; and improves the quality of information that workers receive about the pesticides that have been applied at their workplace. While we are disappointed that the final rule does not include some significant safety measures, we will continue to work with our community partners to advocate for greater worker protections at EPA and at the state and local levels.

In the months to come, we will reach out to farmworkers to help them understand the changes in the law and continue to work to help them understand their right to a safe workplace and environment. We will also work with EPA to ensure timely implementation and strong enforcement of the new rule, and continued engagement with farmworker communities.