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June 5, 2017

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The Honorable Jerry Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

We recently learned of an impressive initiative being undertaken in a number of California schools that provides locally grown foods as part of school meals. While this might not seem as a heavy burden for the largest agricultural state, national sourcing and distribution challenges often limit the choices school districts have. Given this reality, the Center for Ecoliteracy (a non-profit organization) has developed 'California Thursdays' a state-wide campaign working to deliver one freshly prepared, California grown meal, one day a week, throughout the school year.

This campaign has the potential for significant results for students, farmers and our local economies. Currently, 'California Thursdays' is taking place in 71 school districts in 28 counties throughout the state. These districts have more than 1.8 million students enrolled and serve more than 309 million meals throughout the year. If only one California grown meal was served during the school year, it would bring direct results to our farmers and ranchers – 322,000 lbs. of chicken; 199,000 lbs. of brown rice; and 560 gallons of olive oil. Connecting California farmers with our school districts provides local, healthy and nutritious food products to students and can be a powerful tool to increase visibility and awareness of California's agricultural diversity.

As your State Board of Food and Agriculture, we encourage you to take the opportunity to visit a 'California Thursdays' school location and see firsthand the impressive results and support the Center for Ecoliteracy provides to school districts. The Center, through this innovative program, supports the health and nutrition of school children in addition to connecting California farmers and ranchers to local schools.

'California Thursdays' and the state's school children would benefit from your support of this dynamic program.

Best regards,

Craig McNamara
President

