GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Dear Members of the California Congressional Delegation,

I am writing to urge your support for legislation that provides vital support to California's farms.

Many of you signed a May 7, 2007, letter to ask for my support of H.R. 1600, The Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America Act (EAT Healthy America). I am fully supportive of this legislation, and I wish to thank the 31 members of the congressional delegation for supporting this bill and urge the remaining members of the delegation to sign on as cosponsors.

As you know, Congress has the monumental responsibility of reauthorizing the farm bill this year. Despite the fact that our state is the nation's largest agricultural producer and exporter and produces more than 22 of the smallest states combined, historically farm bills have not awarded California proportionate benefits. In the past, the bills have not taken into account the scale of California's agricultural community or our unique public health, environmental and agricultural stewardship needs. Together, our bipartisan delegation can bring a unified voice to the debate and help champion a California-friendly farm bill. Given the agricultural industry's impact on our economy, food supply, communities and way of life, the farm bill affects every single Californian – not just those in rural communities. It provides funding for nutritional programs in our schools, agricultural research in our universities, renewable energy options and solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our land, air and water quality. With key agricultural, food supply and public health provisions, the next farm bill is an opportunity to invest in all of these areas.

H.R. 1600 contains important measures that will make the farm bill more supportive of California's agricultural industry, communities and residents. I applaud the bill's focus on the promotion of healthy diets, by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables in federal feeding programs, including the school lunch and breakfast program, the food stamp program and the Women, Infant & Children program. In addition, the bill provides solutions on greenhouse gas emissions and financial incentives to preserve the environment and promote conservation of working agricultural lands, grasslands, wetlands and wildlife habitat. The bill provides an opportunity for California to support strong conservation and energy measures that send a signal to the nation that we are serious about climate change and creating a robust renewable energy future. It also will increase the competitiveness of California's fruit, nut and vegetable industry by incorporating the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program in the farm bill and will improve research, technical assistance and market access programs to ensure our state's specialty crop agriculture remains vibrant. Finally, the legislation will invest in vital research that supports our agricultural economy, builds a healthier America and fosters renewable energy technologies.

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As Congress moves forward with reauthorization of the farm bill, California's diverse people, agricultural communities and environment must be supported in this process. By cosponsoring H.R. 1600, the delegation can take a major step forward in supporting this shared goal.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger

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