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Board President
General Manager,
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March 26, 2021

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Joy Sterling, CEO
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Andrew J. Thulin, Dean
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environmental
Sciences, California
Polytechnic State
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Christopher Valadez,
President, Grower Shipper
Association of Central
California

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

As you Administration considers 2021-2022 May Revisions to the Governor's January Proposed Budget, we would like to highlight important initiatives occurring within the Department of Food and Agriculture focusing on food access, assistance and nutrition. As your State Board of Food and Agriculture we strongly support the work of the Department's Office of Farm to Fork which connects school districts and community members with local farmers and ranchers statewide.

In particular, there are three programs of the Office of Farm to Fork that are of specific interest to the Board. The California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) encourages the purchase and consumption of healthy, California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables through monetary incentives that match a portion of nutrition assistance benefits received by individuals and families. This CNIP incentive effectively allows the doubling-up of the purchases of fresh and nutritious products, which has been all the more important this year as many families have struggled to put food on the table. Further, CNIP funding allows the Department to access additional federal funding through the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) where state funding assists with a federal match requirement. Demand for the program has greatly increased during the last year. Additional investment in the CNIP program this year will provide strong returns to individuals and families in need of food assistance, support our small farmers in the local markets where the incentives are redeemed, and allow the Department to apply for additional federal funds to allow the program to continue without interruption.

Another program, the Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program funded energy efficient refrigeration units in corner stores and small businesses in low-income or low-access areas throughout the state to stock California-grown fresh produce, nuts and minimally processed foods. This program, with an investment of approximately \$4.4 million, not only supported the purchase of units, but also technical training and outreach to expand food access within communities that previously lacked these resources. The



program supports food access and equity goals while supporting small businesses close to the margin in underserved communities. It is a unique program in that it is able to supply equipment to reduce energy and the greenhouse gas footprint, aligning corner stores with state targets in those realms.

These two programs, combined with the Farm to School Grant Program, promote overall nutrition as well as the purchase of healthy foods from farmers and ranchers. Farm to School, in particular connects education, healthy foods and communities to support a California for All. Funding directly supports the purchase of local grown products by school districts as well as education components connected to school cafeterias, gardens, communities and classrooms. Connecting the importance of a healthy and nutritious diet in outreach and education.

CDFA's Office of Farm to Fork serves an important role in aligning food access, assistance and education in communities throughout the state. The programs indicated above also promote equity and inclusion within our food system, helping to bring communities together. As the State Board we strongly value and support the work of the Office of Farm to Fork in addressing the opportunities of today and of the future.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to share these perspectives.

Sincerely,



Don Cameron

cc: Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Keely Martin Bosler, Department of Finance