



Craig McNamara
Board President
Owner, Sierra Orchards

February 24, 2016

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Executive Director

Ashley Boren
Executive Director
Sustainable Conservation

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Bransford Farms

Don Cameron,
General Manager,
Terranova Ranch, Inc.

Nancy Casady
General Manager
Ocean Beach People's
Organic Food Co-Op

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And Environmental
Sciences, University of
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Ben Drake, President
Drake Enterprises

Michael Gallo, Co-owner
Joseph Gallo Farms

Eric Holst,
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Miles Reiter,
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Driscoll Strawberry
Associates, Inc.

Joy Sterling, CEO
Iron Horse Vineyards

The Honorable Karen Ross
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Ross:

Last month when Governor Brown released the 2016-17 Proposed Budget Summary we were encouraged by the support for the state's agricultural sector. The proposed budget included increased allocations of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds for dairy digesters, the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) and Healthy Soils. These programs are greatly appreciated as farmers and ranchers continue to adjust to a changing climate.


The budget process also provides us an opportunity to revisit the Board's continued support for addressing food insecurity within our state. California, as the most populous state in the nation, does not have ongoing General Fund support for hunger prevention programs, a critical asset in addressing hunger within rural and urban communities.

In New York State, Governor Cuomo has proposed \$34.6 million for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides funding to improve the quality of food distributed to food banks, food pantries, and emergency shelters. In Massachusetts, Governor Baker has proposed \$17 million to support Emergency Food Assistance through regional food banks. This funding equates to approximately \$10-\$16 per capita for food insecure individuals in New York and Massachusetts. In California, we do not provide an ongoing sufficient allocation of General Fund support for food assistance programs.

While the state has taken action through the Drought Food Assistance Program (\$18 million FY2016-17) and the California Emergency Food Program (\$507,000 FY 2016-17) we encourage consideration of ongoing appropriations to address the significant need within our state.

The Board wholeheartedly appreciates the commitment of the Administration to address food insecurity while balancing fiscal priorities and needs within the state. Please let us know how we can further discussions on this topic.

Sincerely,


Craig McNamara
President



Secretary Karen Ross
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cc: Secretary Diana Dooley, California Health and Human Services Agency
Cabinet Secretary Keely Bosler, Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Deputy Legislative Secretary Martha Guzman-Aceves, Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Deputy Legislative Secretary Donna Campbell, Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.