

IMPORTANT Instructions for sending this letter:

Please locate your district's Assemblyperson and Senator here:

<http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>

You will add their information to the bottom of the letter.

Personalize the **highlighted** fields.

Fax this letter to the following addressee/ number:

The Honorable Jimmy Gomez (916) 319-2151

With a copy to the following addressees/numbers:

Assemblymember Phil Ting (author) (916) 319-2119

Office of the Speaker, Assemblymember Atkins (916) 319-2178

Joel Tashjian (916) 319-2181

Your Assemblymember

Your Senator

And E-mail a copy to the following addresses:

Irene Ho @ Irene.Ho@asm.ca.gov

Justin Rausa @ justin@rootsofchange.org

Remove these instructions prior to printing/faxing.

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VIA U.S. MAIL AND FAX

[Date]

The Honorable Jimmy Gomez
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, California 95814

FAX: (916) 319-2151

Re: Support for AB 1321

Dear Assemblymember Gomez,

I support AB 1321, which would improve low-income Californians' access to nutritious food through new incentives for nutrition benefit program recipients to

shop at farmers' markets and also create economic growth in both rural and urban communities throughout the state.

AB 1321 would establish the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program in the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to award grants to nutrition incentive programs. In California, 4 million people struggle with food insecurity and are unable to afford healthy foods. Nutrition incentive programs, like Market Match or the Fresh Fund, increase the purchasing power of CalFresh, WIC, Senior Farmers Market, and SSI and SSDI recipients when they use their nutrition benefits to purchase fruits, nuts, and vegetables at farmers' markets by doubling the value of those benefits at the farmers' market.

The 2014 Farm Bill enacted \$100 million in matching dollars available over the next five years for local nutrition incentive programs that alleviate poverty and food insecurity, maximize access to fresh healthy foods, and stimulate economic growth in both agricultural and urban communities. Of the \$100 million, \$35 million in matching funds will have been allocated before the end of the 2015 legislative session. AB 1321 sets up a state framework to help draw down the remaining \$65 million in USDA grants.

The direct economic benefits will also support local small business owners, and small- and mid-sized California farmers, who struggle with keeping price points competitive for healthy food. Market Match has demonstrated an increase in redemption of CalFresh and other nutrition benefits at participating farmer's markets from 132% to 700% and generates a six-fold return on investment in farmer's market sales. As a result of Market Match, 69% of farmers report that they have new customers and 67% report that they earned more income. Launched in 2009, Market Match has expanded to serve 37,000 families based on only \$237,000 in available Market Match incentive dollars. A \$2 million grant from USDA, could boost healthy food access to \$18 million for over 100,000 families and generate hundreds of new farm jobs. I respectfully ask for your support of AB 1240.

This bill is greatly needed to maximize the financial match from USDA. The combination of California's unparalleled agricultural bounty, vast network of farmers' markets and entrenched poverty gives us a unique opportunity to secure federal funds to expand the reach of nutrition programs in communities where they can most efficiently serve those most in need. For these reasons, I strongly support AB 1321 and respectfully ask for your "Aye" vote on this bill.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

cc: Members of the Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Assemblymember Phil Ting (author) (916) 319-2119
Office of the Speaker, Assemblymember Atkins (916) 319-2178
[Your Assemblymember]
[Your Senator]