



March 15, 2018

Assemblymember Anna M. Caballero
Chair, Assembly Committee on Agriculture
1020 N St, Room 362
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2335 (Ting): Corner Store Refrigeration Pilot Program – Support with amends

Dear Assemblymember Caballero,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) looks forward to supporting AB 2335, with amends to address issues of equity and access in high-need communities. SB 2335 would create the Small Business Nutrition Incentive Pilot Program within the California Department of Food and Agriculture to provide grant incentives to corner stores and other small-scale stores with a limited selection of food products to purchase energy efficient refrigeration. Additionally, the bill would make adjustments to the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program to allow providers earlier access to the grant funds.

CFPA is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. Throughout our more than 25 years of experience, we have worked to achieve a healthy and food secure California. We strongly supported Assemblymember Ting's previous legislative efforts to establish and fund the California Nutrition Incentive Program, and remain in active support of efforts to increase the affordability of fresh produce for low-income Californians

In AB 2335's current language, eligible businesses in the counties of Alameda, Los Angeles, and San Diego and the City and County of San Francisco, would agree to stock fresh California produce in the purchased refrigeration units. To make the most effective use of limited pilot funding to address food insecurity and equity:

*CFPA recommends amends to expand pilot eligibility to eligible retailers in **any California county with an established healthy corner store conversion program**. At a minimum, the county of San Joaquin should be included, given its high rate of poverty, food insecurity, and prevalence of food deserts under the definitions set by AB 2335- and the success of San Joaquin County Public Health Services' "Refresh San Joaquin" Healthy Retail program.*

While food insecurity is a complex cycle rooted in poverty, income inequality, poor health, and hunger; the overall health of a person can also be linked to proximity to grocery stores. According to data from the United States Department of Agriculture from 2013-15, 12.6 percent of California households were living with food insecurity, meaning that these neighborhoods were living with low-quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Food deserts are neighborhoods

where residents have low access to supermarkets. Typically these neighborhoods are low-income urban areas, and residents have no choice but to get their groceries from corner stores, many of which do not stock fresh produce. Corner stores often need much more support than refrigeration to transform their business models to sustainably support a healthier and fresher product mix, a state program that provides refrigeration can relieve some cost burdens often shouldered by community partners.

With an amend to ensure that AB 2335's Pilot Program reaches underserved communities with established healthy corner store initiatives (beyond the counties currently listed), AB 2335 would make the most effective use of limited pilot funding to bring healthier food options to communities that are low-income and lack accessibility to grocery stores. It will also support small- and large-scale specialty crop farmers in California. For these reasons, CFPA looks forward to wholeheartedly supporting AB 2335 with amends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracey Patterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tracey Patterson
Director of Legislation
California Food Policy Advocates

cc: Assemblymember Phil Ting