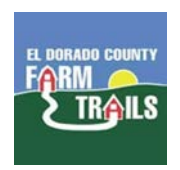




market match





November 18, 2022

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor, State of California
 1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Toni Atkins
 President pro Tempore, California State Senate
 1021 O Street, Suite 8518
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Anthony Rendon
 Speaker, California State Assembly
 1021 O Street, Suite 8330
 Sacramento, CA 9581

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
California State Assembly

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
California State Senate

Re: Request \$35 Million to Refund the California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) in FY23-24

Dear Governor Newsom and Legislative Leaders,

The Ecology Center, Roots of Change, and the California Market Match Consortium, and the undersigned 100+ hunger, sustainable agriculture, food policy councils, nutrition, and local food systems organizations, **write to respectfully request you include one-time funding of \$35 million to ensure continued support of the [California Nutrition Incentive Program](#) (CNIP) at California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) Office of Farm to Fork, including programs like the statewide [Market Match](#) nutrition incentive program.** Funding CNIP in FY23-24 would allow the state to meet the required 100% non-federal match to win substantial federal grant funds to continue these essential food security programs that reach hundreds of thousands of low-income Californians, support small and medium-sized independent farmers, and aid in stabilizing the state's economy. The pandemic and the economy continue to exacerbate food insecurity and this program is an essential lifeline for low-income Californians and small farmers.

The Market Match Program is currently the single largest CNIP program, administered through CDFA. Market Match is California's largest nutrition incentive program, matching federal nutrition assistance benefits, like CalFresh and WIC, at farmers' markets and other farm-direct sites. Led by The Ecology Center, Market Match is available at more than 270 sites, spanning 38 counties, that are run by over 60 community-based organizations and farmers' market operators.

The federal Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), brings federal dollars into the state and the CNIP/Market Match program keeps them here. Market Match helps leverage federal funds by matching nutrition assistance benefits with funds that can be spent by low-income Californians to buy healthy, fresh food grown by California farmers. This year we expect nearly \$13 million in federal dollars to come to California through GusNIP, to support Market Match and other nutrition incentive programs, for a 2-year period that ends in 2025. The program is a win-win-win: increasing the spending power of low-income Californians, enhancing access to fresh, healthy produce and food, and reinvesting state and federal dollars into California's small and mid-sized farms and rural communities.

Problem: Pandemic and Economy Drives Growing Need for Market Match Incentives

Since the beginning of the pandemic, CalFresh enrollment has grown significantly, with Californians struggling to afford basic necessities, like food, for their families. As a result, the sites offering Market Match have seen a significant increase in participation. In 2021, consumers spent over \$13 million in Market Match and CalFresh combined at participating locations. This represented a 161% increase in total spent compared to 2019 and a 71% increase in customers served compared to 2019 at more than 451,000 transactions, showing us that this program helped to address a growing need during the pandemic. We estimate that the program led to the purchase of 26 million servings of fresh fruits and vegetables. **Without additional state appropriations in the next fiscal year, the Market Match program will not be able to continue past 2024.**

Solution: 2023 Budget Act Funds Needed to Meet Low-Income Californians' Food Access

The GusNIP competitive grant program application period opens in the coming fiscal year, and it requires a 100% match of state, local or private funding. An investment now of \$35 million of state funds into CNIP, and an extension to encumber the funds, would allow the program to meet the non-federal match and *bring significant federal funds into the state*. A [2021 report](#) from Colorado State University shows that incentive programs in a farm-direct setting have the highest economic multiplier of 3.0. That means every \$1 of incentives spent at a farmers' market generates \$3 of additional spending in the local economy.

If California does not appropriate CNIP funds for FY23-24 that can be used to meet the required match, then our state risks losing the opportunity to apply for federal GusNIP funds; which would then mean ending the successful Market Match program that supports 270+ farm-direct sites, hundreds of small and medium farmers, and hundreds of thousands of low-income Californians. For the above reasons, our organizations respectfully request \$35 million in one-time funding for the California Nutrition Incentive Program.

We greatly appreciate your consideration. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.



Sincerely,

Martin Bourque
Executive Director, Ecology Center
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Michael Dimock
Executive Director, Roots of Change
michael@rootsofchange.org

Other Signatories:

Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project
Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet
Agricultural Community Events Farmers
Markets
Agricultural Institute of Marin
Alchemist CDC
Altadena Farmers Market
Blue Zones Project Monterey County
Butte County Local Food Network
CAFF
Cal State Properties
Cambria Farmers market
Center for Food Safety
Center for Wellness and Nutrition
Ceres Community Project
Chico Certified Farmer's Market, Inc.
City of Rialto
Coastside Farmers' Markets

Colusa Certified Farmers Market
Community Health Councils
Congregation Shomrei Torah
Discover Pacific Beach
Downtown SLO
Eastmont Community Center
Ecological Farming Association
El Dorado County Farm Trails
Environmental Working Group
Etna Farmers Market
Everyone's Harvest
Farmers Market Coalition
Food for People
Foodwise
Fresh Approach
Fresno EOC
GLIDE
Growing Humans

Healthy Black Families Inc.
Heart of the City Farmers Market
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Interfaith Council of Sonoma County
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative
JEDI
Knollwood United Methodist Church
Laytonville certified farmers market
Little Italy Association
Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen San Jose
Long Beach Fresh
Los Angeles Community Action Network
Los Angeles Food Policy Council
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Madera Community Hospital
Marin County Aging and Adult Services
Marin Food Policy Council
Marin VOAD
Model Neighborhood Program
Modoc Harvest
Monterey Bay CFM
Mount Shasta Farmers' Market
Napa Farmers Market
NextGen California
North Coast Growers Association
North Coast Natural Produce
North Coast Opportunities, Caring Kitchen
North Figueroa Association
Nourish California
Nutrition & Fitness Collaborative of the
Central Coast
Orange County Farm Bureau
Orange Home Grown Foundation
Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association
Petaluma Bounty
Providence
Pure Honey Company
River City Food Bank
Riverside Food Systems Alliance

Roots of Change
Route 1 Farmers' Market
Sac State
San Diego Hunger Coalition
San Diego Markets
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank
San Mateo Food Systems Alliance
Santa Cruz Community Farmers' Markets
Santa Rosa Original Certified Farmers
Market
Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange
County
Sierra Harvest
Siskiyou Community Food Bank
SLO Food Bank
Slow Food Legislative group
Slow Food Russian River
Sonoma County United in Kindness
SPUR
St James of Jerusalem
Sunset Mercantile | Outer Sunset Farmers
Market & Mercantile
Sustainable Management Services
Thai Community Development Center
The Berkeley Food Network
The Friends of the Mill Valley Children's
Garden
The HEAL Project
The Original Certified Farmers' Markets of
the Coachella Valley
The Praxis Project
The Ravens Mouth LLC
The Woodland Farmers Market
Urban Village Farmers' Market Association
Windsor Community United Methodist
Church
Wookey Ranch
Xela AID Partnerships for Self Reliance

CC:

Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Agriculture
Joe Stephenshaw, Director Department of Finance
Elysia Fong, Office of Farm to Fork