



SPUR

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

June 30, 2015

Senator Cathleen Galgiani
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture
State Capitol, Room 2059
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 1321, California Nutrition Incentives Act

Dear Senator Galgiani:

On behalf of SPUR, I am writing in support of the California Nutrition Incentives Act (AB 1321) introduced by Assembly Member Phil Ting.

In our recently published report, *Healthy Food Within Reach*, we highlight the importance of reducing the barriers that Bay Area residents face in accessing healthy food. One of the primary barriers is the affordability of healthy food and one of our top recommendations to help Californians overcome this barrier was promoting healthy food incentive programs like those outlined in this legislation. Known by a variety of names across the country – and as Market Match in California – these programs increase the purchasing power of low-income customers by providing them with matching dollars for produce purchases.

Evaluations from across the country have shown healthy food incentive programs to be effective in increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, which helps reduce food insecurity and has a positive impact on public health. And, when the program is available at farmers’ markets, it not only improves the affordability of produce for low-income customers but also increases local farmers’ revenue and the economic viability of the regional food system.

Given these benefits, we strongly support efforts to secure long-term, steady funding for expansion of healthy food incentives at farmers’ markets statewide. We also support the legislation’s inclusion of a grocery store pilot. The vast majority of food assistance dollars are spent at grocery stores and for programs like this to have a wider impact, we believe California needs to explore expanding them beyond farmers’ markets, as envisioned with this pilot. The legislation currently limits the grocery pilot project to small retailers with annual sales less than \$10 million. SPUR believes that however the pilot is structured, a long-term vision of a healthy food incentive program should include expansion to grocery stores and any produce retailer that accepts food assistance benefits.

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SPUR respectfully requests your AYE vote for Assembly Bill 1321.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Zigas', is positioned above the typed name.

Eli Zigas
Food and Agriculture Policy Director

CC: Senators Mark Leno, Jim Beall, Bob Wieckowski, Loni Hancock
Assembly Member Phil Ting