

March 11, 2016

Assemblymember Richard Bloom  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3  
State Capitol, Room 2003  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Bloom:

**On behalf of SPUR, I respectfully request that the Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Resources and Transportation include as an agenda item a funding request for the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program.**

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 is promoting healthy food incentive programs. 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. The California Nutrition Incentives Act of 2015 (AB 1321) which Governor Brown signed into law last year set up the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program to help draw down federal matching grants for local nutrition incentive programs. Last year, the Legislature's 2015-16 Budget Conference Committee approved \$2.5 million in funding for the program, but it was stricken from the final budget agreement. While that level of funding would be helpful, a larger \$5 million state investment in the program could leverage twice as much federal matching funds and result in at least \$10 million for expansion of nutrition incentive programs across California.

As Californians continue to face difficulty affording healthy food, SPUR respectfully requests that Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 take up the issue of funding the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program in an upcoming budget hearing.

Sincerely,



Eli Zigas  
Food and Agriculture Policy Director