

May 31, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of SPUR, I respectfully request that you support \$5 million in the state budget for nutrition incentives. This funding will help make healthy food more affordable for low-income Californians and support the state's farmers.

In our 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 most commonly 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 expand healthy food incentives. The California Nutrition Incentives Act of 2015 (AB 1321) which you 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. A \$5 million state investment in the program could leverage an equal amount of 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 you support this modest investment in healthy food incentives.

Sincerely,



Eli Zigas
Food and Agriculture Policy Director