

The Honorable Connie M. Leyva
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 499 (McGuire) – California Grown for Healthy Kids Act

Dear Chairperson Leyva:

SPUR requests your support of SB 499 (McGuire), legislation that will create and sustain equitable, healthy, hunger-free schools through an extra 10 cents per breakfast reimbursement for school districts to purchase California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. To earn this incentive, school districts must, at a minimum, serve breakfast universally free in all schools, and serve breakfast and lunch universally free at very high poverty schools.

As we noted in our report *Healthy Food Within Reach*, improving access to school meals is one of the best strategies we have available for improving food security and nutrition for California kids.¹ The marketing of unhealthy food is pervasive and state government has a role to play in making healthier choices more convenient than unhealthy choices. In addition, kids who are well fed are not only healthier, but also can better focus on learning at school.

And, as we noted in SPUR's *Locally Nourished*, using public procurement including school meals to support California agriculture has economic benefits to the state far beyond the farms growing the fruits and vegetables served in the cafeteria.²

With the state's high cost of living, many Californians struggle to make ends meet and often have inadequate money for food. School meals can be a key strategy for getting students the healthy food they need to learn, grow and build healthy habits for a lifetime and provide support for families struggling to make ends meet.

For these reasons, we strongly support the *California-Grown Healthy Kids Act* and request your aye vote on SB 499.

Sincerely,



Katie Ettman
Food and Agriculture Policy Associate

¹ SPUR, *Healthy Food Within Reach*, February 2015: www.spur.org/foodaccess

² SPUR, *Locally Nourished*, May 2013: www.spur.org/locallynourished

cc: Senator McGuire (author) via Kimberly Kollwitz
Elyse Homel Vitale, California Food Policy Advocates