



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE  
WITH FAMILY FARMERS

March 28, 2018

The Honorable Scott Wiener, Chair  
Human Services Committee, California State Senate  
1020 N Street, Room 521  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 900 (Wiener) – CalFresh EBT -- SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Wiener,

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a statewide organization that represents both farmers and non-farm urban residents who support sustainable food and farming policies. CAFF is pleased to support your SB 900 (Wiener), which would advance our existing state systems to fight hunger and poverty, improve health, and support California agriculture. SB 900 would enable the CalFresh EBT system to integrate dollar-for-dollar matching benefits to support purchases of California-grown fruits and vegetables, and pilot community-based initiatives to implement this upgraded EBT system at grocery stores and farmers' markets through grants to locations across the state.

It is a curious fact that the regions of the state with the greatest abundance of fresh produce are also those areas with the least access to this produce. SB 900 will link our state's agricultural abundance with low-income Californians' needs for healthy and affordable food. CalFresh helps over 4 million people put food on the table on an average day. Despite the reach of CalFresh, the federal benefit levels limit Californians' ability to purchase healthy foods grown in our own state. To better reach CalFresh customers, we must progress towards integrating California fruit and vegetable benefits onto the CalFresh EBT card, which is widely accepted by food retailers statewide.

SB 900 is a "win-win-win" that fights poverty, supports health and nutrition, and boosts California's agriculture. SB 900 would create market-based incentives for retailers to market California-grown produce to all customers. It would ensure that farm-direct outlets like farmers' markets are included in a state system that would work in various retail markets. The pilots would aim to increase the purchasing power of CalFresh

households, while continuing to support California's farmers and food systems.

Because SB 900 would provide clear benefits to rural farm worker communities as well as to California produce growers, CAFF respectfully requests your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Runsten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Runsten  
Policy Director

cc: Senator Galgiani, Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee  
Tracey Patterson, California Food Policy Advocates (co-sponsor)  
Eli Zigas, SPUR (co-sponsor)