



May 14, 2021

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
California State Assembly  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
California State Senate  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1  
California State Assembly  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 3  
California State Senate  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Request for \$110 Million in Funding for Food Banks in the 2021-2022 Budget Act**

Dear Budget Leaders:

We are writing to request \$110 million in one-time funding for California Food Banks in the 2021-2022 Budget.

Californians across the state are in the midst of a full-blown hunger crisis and food banks have been on the frontlines making sure families have food to eat. In 2020, California's food banks have labored to provide our communities with over one billion pounds of food.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity has increased by almost three times and the number of families in need has skyrocketed. Recent data show that more than 25 percent of California households are currently experiencing food insecurity, and in truth, the COVID-19 pandemic has only further highlighted the existing food insecurity and hunger struggles that millions of Californians have experienced for decades.

The ongoing global health crisis has further exacerbated racial and ethnic disparities as 34.9 percent of Latinx and nearly 40 percent of Black households with children face food insecurity. Currently, the food banks are seeing double the demand for food resources, and food banks expect this demand to remain the same as the number of families struggling to pay rent and meet basic needs continues to grow.

To address the challenges faced by far too many vulnerable Californians we as state leaders must strengthen our social safety net by securing sufficient funding to meet basic needs for families.

Last year, California food banks served a staggering 1 billion pounds of food, a 74 percent increase overall from before the pandemic. Community demand remains extremely high: the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank reports still serving three times the number of people before COVID-19, and the Alameda County Community Food Bank anticipates record demand to continue for at least another year.

At the same time, food banks are facing a cliff in community donations and federal foods. Even with the American Rescue Plan, food banks expect nearly a 50 percent drop in federal foods available from the USDA. Community food donations have also dropped significantly, as many families who have donated now rely on food banks to eat, and the familiar barrels have been restricted out of public health safety. The San Luis Obispo Food Bank reported, for example, that they lost 25 percent of their donations during this time of record need.

Continued state support is therefore critical. Prior investments have enabled food banks to provide families healthy food in contact-free distributions, but will quickly be exhausted. \$110 million is needed to meet the projected statewide demand throughout the upcoming 2021 - 2022 budget year.

As food banks continue to embrace providing families with life-saving resources, California must expand investment in keeping food on the table. Our failure to do so will widen the economic, health, and social inequities of our communities for years to come. Food is fundamental to all else – it fuels learning for our children, strengthens our older adults, improves all of our health, and builds community.

To rebuild our economy, one-time funding of \$110 million is a vital investment to address food insecurity and empower our food banks' continued support of our most vulnerable during these challenging times. Additionally, this funding will support critical jobs in the hard-hit food service sector while providing food for those in need.

We request your full consideration and strong support of this request for our California families in need.

Sincerely,



Buffy Wicks  
Assemblymember, 15<sup>th</sup> District



John Laird  
State Senator, 17<sup>th</sup> District



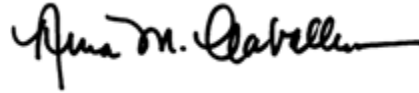
Bob Archuleta,  
State Senator, 32<sup>nd</sup> District



Tasha Boerner Horvath  
Assemblymember, 76<sup>th</sup> District



Cecilia Aguiar-Curry  
Assemblymember, 4<sup>th</sup> District



Anna Caballero  
State Senator, 12<sup>th</sup> District



Patricia Bates  
State Senator, 36<sup>th</sup> District



Wendy Carrillo  
Assemblymember, 51<sup>st</sup> District



Rebecca Bauer-Kahan  
Assemblymember, 16<sup>th</sup> District



Phillip Chen  
Assemblymember, 55<sup>th</sup> District



Josh Becker  
State Senator, 13<sup>th</sup> District



David Chiu  
Assemblymember, 17<sup>th</sup> District



Steve Bennett  
Assemblymember, 37<sup>th</sup> District



Ken Cooley  
Assemblymember, 8<sup>th</sup> District



Marc Berman  
Assemblymember, 24<sup>th</sup> District



Jim Frazier  
Assemblymember, 11<sup>th</sup> District



Jesse Gabriel  
Assemblymember, 45<sup>th</sup> District



Ben Hueso  
State Senator, 40<sup>th</sup> District



Cristina Garcia  
Assemblymember, 58<sup>th</sup> District



Melissa Hurtado,  
State Senator, 14<sup>th</sup> District



Mike Gipson  
Assemblymember, 64<sup>th</sup> District



Brian Jones  
State Senator, 38<sup>th</sup> District



Lena Gonzalez  
State Senator, 33<sup>rd</sup> District



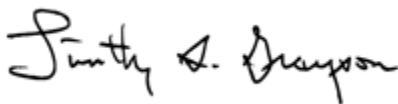
Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr.  
Assemblymember, 59<sup>th</sup> District



Adam Gray  
Assemblymember, 21<sup>st</sup> District



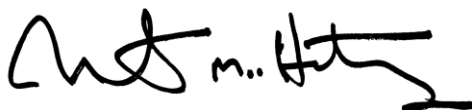
Alex Lee  
Assemblymember, 25<sup>th</sup> District



Timothy Grayson  
Assemblymember, 14<sup>th</sup> District



Marc Levine  
Assemblymember, 10<sup>th</sup> District



Robert M. Hertzberg  
State Senator, 18<sup>th</sup> District



Connie Leyva  
State Senator, 20<sup>th</sup> District



Monique Limón  
State Senator, 19<sup>th</sup> District



Freddie Rodriguez  
Assemblymember, 52<sup>nd</sup> District



Devon Mathis  
Assemblymember, 26<sup>th</sup> District



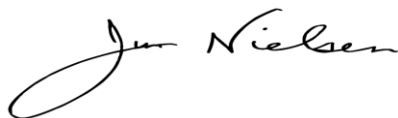
Mark Stone  
Assemblymember, 29<sup>th</sup> District



Janet Nguyen  
Assemblymember, 72<sup>nd</sup> District



Thomas Umberg  
State Senator, 34<sup>th</sup> District



Jim Nielsen  
State Senator, 4<sup>th</sup> District



Scott Wiener  
State Senator, 11<sup>th</sup> District



Sharon Quirk-Silva  
Assemblymember, 65<sup>th</sup> District



Henry Stern  
State Senator, 27<sup>th</sup> District



Eloise Gomez Reyes  
Assemblymember, 47<sup>th</sup> District



Brian Maienschein  
Assemblymember, 77<sup>th</sup> District



Luz Rivas  
Assemblymember, 39<sup>th</sup> District