



April 1, 2008

The Honorable Jenny Oropeza
Chair, Senate Revenue and Taxation
State Capitol, Room 408
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Sponsorship of SB 1101, Emergency Food Assistance Tax Checkoff

Dear Senator Oropeza,

The California Association of Food Banks and our 40 member food banks urge your support for SB 1101 (Cedillo), renewal of the existing tax checkoff for emergency food assistance.

Under current law, Californians can help end hunger by helping local food banks purchase healthy food for low-income families, through a checkoff on line 57 of the State tax forms. The emergency food tax checkoff sunsets in 2009 and must be renewed this year. **SB 1101 (Cedillo) will renew this tax checkoff and allow Californians to continue providing healthy, emergency food to people in need.**

The emergency food checkoff raises more than \$400,000 in private funds each year for food purchases by food banks. This translated to 602,847 pounds or 470,974 meals for people in need in 2007-08. The funds are administered by the state's Department of Social Services' Emergency Food Assistance program. The fifty (50) local food banks under contract with DSS to provide USDA commodities to low-income people receive the checkoff funds. Each local food bank receives a base amount of \$5,000, plus an additional amount based on their county's population size and poverty rate.

Healthy food is purchased with the emergency food checkoff funds. Most California food banks used EFAP tax checkoff funds to purchase high-protein foods, like chicken, turkey, canned tuna and peanut butter. High-quality, protein-rich foods can be difficult for food banks to get donated or purchase and can be too expensive for low-income families.

These funds are particularly critical given the currently low levels of public funding for emergency food. The State provides no public funding for emergency food. (One important exception was during last year's citrus freeze disaster, when the State provided \$6.1 million for food for farm workers who lost work and needed food assistance). What's more, federal USDA

food supplies to food banks have dropped so significantly that 45 million *fewer* meals were provided to low-income Californians in 2007 than in 2002. (see CAFB December 2007 report at www.cafarbill.org)

On behalf of the over one million Californians served by the emergency food assistance program and by our member food banks, please support the renewal of the EFAP tax checkoff and vote for SB 1101.

Sincerely,

Kim McCoy Wade
Executive Director