

# Communities of Faith Call Out: End Hunger Now!

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*Our thoughts and prayers are with those struggling to deal with the hunger, homelessness, death, and destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.*

*The rising floodwaters made every American a witness to a horrible truth: too many of our sisters and brothers struggled with basic food, clothing and shelter even before the storm.*

*As communities of faith, we are focusing our attention and resources on Katrina relief efforts. At the same time, mindful of the daily struggles of our sisters and brothers in California, we shall dedicate ourselves to channeling the long-awaited public outcry about American poverty to our mission to end poverty and hunger in this prosperous state.*

*According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture 5 million Californians struggle to put food on the table. We should not wait for a natural disaster to respond. Our core traditions have always called upon the faithful to feed the hungry and now is no exception.*

*We therefore call on individuals, charities and government to address the recent tragedy in the South and the ongoing problem of hunger right here at home.*

*We ask that individuals not only increase their attention and giving to provide immediate relief in Katrina's wake, but also address the ongoing struggles of low-income Americans. We ask that charities here in California assist in efforts in the South, while continuing to help their neighbors meet basic needs here at home.*

*We also ask that California's political leadership do their part to meet the immediate needs of Katrina victims and the ongoing needs of our state's most vulnerable residents by:*

**Reflecting back on recent actions:** *How will recent state budget actions, particularly those impacting aid to our state's seniors and the disabled, exacerbate our state's growing hunger problem? We ask that state leaders take steps to mitigate this harm.*

**Reconsidering proposed cuts to vital programs:** *We ask California's congressional delegation to stop federal efforts to cut health care and food stamps. The families from communities ravaged by Katrina, as well as families in communities throughout California, deserve no less.*

**Responding to immediate opportunities:** *Policymakers need a long-term plan to address poverty and hunger. Such a plan is long overdue. In the meantime, Governor Schwarzenegger has several concrete opportunities before him to improve the lives of low-income Californians. Specifically, we ask that the Governor sign AB 696, the Food for Families Act, and AB 1385, the Food for School Children Act. These targeted actions will help address hunger right here at home. He can also act to improve wages and increase access to health care, all with the stroke of a pen.*

**Readying the state for the future:** *Political leaders should begin to prepare for future crises and prepare to end poverty in this great state. Katrina has taught us that poverty and poor public preparation are a disastrous combination.*

*We rededicate ourselves to fighting poverty and hunger, both here and abroad. We raise our collective voice in a call to action: End Hunger Now!*

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Signed

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Print Name

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Faith community or service organization represented

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*Please forward these calls to action to Fresno Metro Ministry by Fax at (559) 485-9109 or email at [edie@fresnometmin.org](mailto:edie@fresnometmin.org)*