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March 12, 2014

The Honourable Rob Bonta
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94249

Re: CFPA Support for AB 1661

Dear Assembly Member Bonta,

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) writes in support of AB 1661, which would allow for the establishment of Healthy Options for Everyone (HOPE) Incentive Zones within cities and counties across California. Such zones are intended to increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, and other grown foods in areas identified as a food desert, with a significant portion of the population receiving nutrition assistance, and/or otherwise identified as in need of increased healthy food access.

CFPA is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. One of CFPA's goals is to improve environments to support access to nutritious, affordable food. This includes increasing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in communities that may currently have limited access to such foods and include a large number of families receiving or eligible to receive nutrition assistance through the federal nutrition programs, such as CalFresh and the National School Lunch Program.

AB 1661 would authorize a city, county, or city and county to establish by ordinance a HOPE Incentive Zone for the purpose of incentivizing increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other grown foods within the zone. While the bill does not allocate funding for this purpose, it allows the creation of an incentive at the local level, such as a tax break, for a small business, farmer's market, grocery, or other provider of fresh foods to operate within the zone.

AB 1661 recognizes that increased availability and access to healthy foods changes the food environment, helping to make the healthy choice the easy choice. For this reason, CFPA supports AB 1661 and thanks you for introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexis Fernández", written over a horizontal line.

Alexis Fernández
Director of Legislation
California Food Policy Advocates