



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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February 21, 2024

Senator Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Save Market Match: Keep California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) in the FY 2024/25 Budget

Dear Senator Wiener and Assemblymember Gabriel,

The County of Mendocino joins the Ecology Center, Roots of Change, and the California Market Match Consortium to request continued support for the California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP), and that the \$35 million previously allocated to the project is kept in the 2024 budget. This safety net funding will maintain programs like the statewide Market Match nutrition incentive program which provides millions of fruit and vegetable servings to low-income Californians.

With California's current budget crisis, we understand that tough decisions must be made. However, with California's high cost of living, safety net programs must be prioritized, including CNIP, which funds Market Match. Market Match is a 14-year-old program that matches CalFresh's spending dollar-for-dollar (up to a daily max) for fresh food at the local level and drives health equity and economic development in rural areas. Further, CNIP funds are matched by federal grant dollars. Since 2017, CNIP funding has brought more than \$30 million in federal match funds into California from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP).

The Market Match Program is currently the largest CNIP program, matching federal nutrition assistance benefits, like CalFresh and WIC, at farmers' markets and other California farm-direct sites. Led by The Ecology Center, Market Match is available at 293 sites, spanning 52 counties, 37 Senate

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districts, and 66 Assembly districts. These 293 active Market Match sites are run by 57 community-based organizations and farmers' market operators.

In 2024, CNIP is expected to draw approximately \$13 million in matching federal dollars to California through GusNIP to support Market Match and other nutrition incentive programs for a 2-year period that ends in 2025. The program is a win-win-win: increasing the spending power of low-income Californians, enhancing access to fresh, healthy produce and food, and reinvesting state and federal dollars into California's small and mid-sized farms and rural communities.

In 2022, low-income shoppers spent a total of \$19.5 million in Market Match and CalFresh programs combined, at 270 participating farmers' markets across 39 counties in California. This resulted in 630,000 Market Match transactions, which is a 390% increase from the year 2019. This remarkable increase in spending highlights the urgent need for such programs. In Mendocino County, farmer's markets recorded \$107,784 in market match spending in 2023.

Market Match has invested more than a decade in building this public-private partnership to effectively execute on the ground at the local level across the state. Even a one-year gap in funding will damage critical infrastructure, lay off many long-term program operators in grassroots organizations, and leave federal match dollars on the table for other states.

For the above reasons, the County of Mendocino respectfully requests the protection of the \$35 million previously approved for the California Nutrition Incentive Program.

Sincerely,



Maureen Mulheren, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

CC: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors