



AB 125: The Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms and Worker Protection Bond Act

SUMMARY

Assembly Bill 125 will place the Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms and Worker Protection Bond Act before the voters in 2022. This bond includes \$3.302 billion in investments that will accelerate California's economic recovery and improve the state's climate resilience while also increasing healthy food access, protecting essential food and farm system workers, investing in regional food processing and market infrastructure, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

BACKGROUND

The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the vulnerabilities of California's communities, exacerbating food insecurity and exposing essential frontline workers to disproportionate health risks. The impacts of the pandemic have been many and diverse, and have fallen heavily on people of color, including the farmworker communities who harvest our food and essential workers throughout our food supply chains. Shattered food supply chains have resulted in farm products rotting in the fields as millions of Californians go hungry. It is clear that we need to invest in the food and farming systems in California to combat hunger, create and restore jobs, support agricultural businesses, and build resilient communities.

PROBLEM

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored numerous challenges in the state that require swift and ongoing action. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of food-insecure Californians increased by 2.1 million, for a total of 6.4 million food insecure people in the state.¹ Food banks do not have the means or resources to provide for the increasing number of hungry Californians, while some crops remain in the fields because of failed supply chains. Meanwhile farmers who relied on restaurant and institutional markets experienced a 50 percent loss in

markets at the beginning of the pandemic and continue to experience volatile markets.² Restaurants and other food businesses have been decimated by the pandemic and many will likely remain closed post-pandemic. Farmworkers, many of whom live in overcrowded conditions, have been especially vulnerable to contracting COVID-19. One recent study found that Monterey County farmworkers were three times more likely to contract the coronavirus compared to other workers in the county.³ These bleak realities require judicious and ongoing support from the state.

SOLUTION

The time is now to scale up just solutions to bolster economic recovery and withstand a looming climate crisis. Assembly Bill 125 will strengthen recovery efforts by bringing jobs to our communities, protect our essential frontline workers, and create a secure and resilient food and farming system. The bond will invest in four main areas:

- **\$700 million** for regional and local food processing, distribution, and market infrastructure. California needs many more food hubs to aggregate supply from producers, as well as food processing, meat processing and livestock slaughter facilities, cold storage, and distribution facilities – all with an eye towards building sustainable and resilient local and regional food systems.
- **\$637 million** for farmworker safety and well-being. This bond addresses farmworker health and safety such as safe and affordable housing, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on farmworker homes, and personal protective equipment for wildfires and COVID.
- **\$750 million** for infrastructure to combat hunger - With an estimated 6.4 million food insecure Californians, improves food access for the most vulnerable Californians to combat hunger.

¹ See: https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Brief_Local%20Impact_5.19.2020.pdf

² #FarmersFeedtheNeed – a coordinated effort to provide food to needy Californians. April 30, 2020. CDFA blog. <https://plantingseedsblog.cdfa.ca.gov/wordpress/?p=21213Manzana>

³ Increased Risks and Fewer Jobs: Evidence of California Farmworker Vulnerability During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Villarejo, D. July 25, 2020. CIRS. https://www.cirsinc.org/phocadownload/farmworker_vulnerability_covid-19_research-report_final_villarejo_07-26-2020.pdf



Assemblymember Robert Rivas, 30th Assembly District

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- **\$1.245 billion** for sustainable agriculture, on-farm climate resilience and biodiversity and compost facilities — Diverse, organic, and regenerative cropping systems help reduce farmers’ economic vulnerabilities by expanding market opportunities. These investments also modernize fairground infrastructure, protect groundwater resources, generate more compost, rebuild soil health and improve on-farm resilience to droughts, floods, and pest outbreaks.

Together, these important efforts will accelerate our state’s economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while combating climate change, improving food security, and protecting our essential food and farm system workers.

SUPPORT

A Better Course – for Alemany Farmers Market
 Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet
 Agriculture & Land Based Training Association (ALBA)
 Agriculture Institute of Marin
 Alameda County Board of Supervisors
 Alameda County Community Food Bank
 Alianza Ecologista
 Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
 Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
 American Farmland Trust
 Asian Business Institute and Resource Center
 CAP OC Food Bank
 CAUSE
 CUESA
 California Association of Area Agencies on Aging
 California Association of Food Banks
 California Cattlemen’s Association
 California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)
 California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN)
 California Community Colleges – Employer Engagement for Agriculture, Water & Environmental Programs
 California Compost Coalition
 California FarmLink
 California Food and Farming Network
 California Institute for Rural Studies
 California Interfaith Power & Light
 California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
 California State Grange

Californians Against Waste
 Californians for Pesticide Reform
 Capay Valley Farm Shop
 Carbon Cycle Institute
 Cardoza and Cardoza Farming Co.
 Center for Biological Diversity
 Center for Ecoliteracy
 Center for Environmental Health
 Center for Food Safety
 Center for Good Food Purchasing
 Center for Land-Based Learning
 Center for Regenerative Agriculture & Resilient Systems
 Center for Wellness and Nutrition
 Central California Environmental Justice Network
 Central Coast Ag Network & City Farm SLO
 Central Valley Partnership
 Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)
 Ceres Community Project
 Chez Pansse
 Clean Water and Air Matter
 Coastside Farmers Market
 Common Table Creative
 Community Alliance with Family Farmers
 Community Environmental Council
 Cooperation Humbolt
 Cultiva La Salud
 Dock to Dish LA
 Double OG
 Ecology Center
 Environmental Working Group
 Everyone’s Harvest
 FACTS: Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxins Safety
 Farm to Pantry
 Fibershed
 Fillmore Farms
 Food Forward
 Food Share of Ventura County
 Food System Coalition of San Luis Obispo County
 Food for People
 Fresh Approach
 Friends of the Earth
 Full Belly Farm
 Full Circle Wool
 GMO Free California
 GMO Science
 Good Eggs



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Green Foothills
Greenbelt Alliance
Guru Ram Das Orchards
Health Care Without Harm
Hercules Farm
House Farm Workers!
IRM, Inc (Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries)
Innovative Health Solutions
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative
Kiss the Ground
L.A. Compost
LaRocaa Vineyards
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Little Manila Rising
Little Paradise Farm
Los Angeles Food Policy Council
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Madera Coalition for Community Justice
Manzanita Manor Organics
Marin Agricultural Land Trust
Matthiasson Family Vineyards
McGrath Family Farms
Meals on Wheels California
Monterey Bay Central Labor Council
Mount Shasta Farmers' Market
National Young Farmers Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
North Coast Growers Association
North County Farmers Market Association
Nourish California
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center
One Fair Wage
Open Silo
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Pastures
PT Ranch
Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association
Paicines Ranch
Pesticide Action Network
Pitzer College
Point Blue Conservation Science
Prevention Institute
Public Health Institute
Republic Services
Repurpose, Inc.
Riverside Food Cooperative, Inc.
Riverside Unified School District
Robert Skinskey Vineyards

Roots of Change
Rustic Canyon Family
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Sacramento Food Policy Council
San Bernardino Valley Concert Association
San Diego Fishermen's Working Group
San Diego Food Bank
San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
Save Mount Diablo
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley
Second Harvest of the Greater Valley
Sierra Harvest
Sierra Orchards
Slow Food California
Social Justice Learning Institute
Solano Land Trust
Sonoma Safe Ag Safe Schools
Sunrise Movement Orange County
Sustainable Agriculture Education
Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles
Sustainable Economies Law Center
Taylor Farm Retail Inc.
The Climate Center
The Cloverleaf Farm
The Edible Schoolyard Project
The Praxis Project
The SF Market
True Grass Farms
United Food and Commercial Workers (WFCW) Western States Council
Vineyard Team
Western United Dairies
Wild Farm Alliance
Yolo Food Bank
Zero Foodprint

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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