

AB 2385

Supporting Nutrition through Access to Produce (SNAP) Act

Assemblymember
Phil Ting
19TH DISTRICT



SUMMARY

The federal Farm Bill enacted in 2014 provides \$100 million in grants to states for programs that supplement nutrition benefits if they are spent on produce at farmers' markets. California already has a network in place to draw down these funds through local Market Match programs, which increase the purchase of fresh produce among economically disadvantaged families while helping support small- to mid-size farms. AB 2385 creates a statewide program to award grants to broaden the impact of Market Match programs with the aid of federal funding.

BACKGROUND

The United States Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the federal Farm Bill, has made unprecedented cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and other "safety net" programs which serve those most in need.

Conversely, under the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive provision, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$20 million per year for five years in matching grants to support qualified farmers' market match programs. These programs, known in California simply as Market Match, encourage low-income families receiving nutrition benefits to purchase fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables. Market Match doubles the amount of nutrition benefits these families can spend at farmers' markets, providing an incentive to purchase fresh produce and keep their families healthy.

California is positioned to benefit from an expansion of the Market Match program. California's agricultural abundance includes more than 400 commodities. The state produces nearly half of US-grown fruits, nuts and vegetables. We have approximately 700 certified Farmers' Markets and 2,200 certified producers. We also have a large persistent poverty problem to solve.

Market Match is currently operating at over 140 farmers' markets, increasing the spending power of 37,000

families. According to a report written by Farmers' Market of America, between 2009 and 2012, Market Match increased CalFresh redemption at participating markets from 132% to 700%. The report estimates a six-fold return on investment in farmers' market sales. Based on this report, the nonprofit Roots of Change estimates that an expenditure of just \$2 million toward California's Market Match programs, matched with \$2 million from USDA, could provide healthy food access amounting to \$18 million a year for over 100,000 families and generate hundreds of new farm jobs.

THIS BILL

AB 2385 enacts the Supporting Nutrition through Access to Produce (SNAP) Act, which creates the Market Match Nutrition Incentives Program at the Department of Food and Agriculture. The program would award grants to Certified Farmers' Markets, Certified Farmers' Market associations, and non-profit organizations for the operation of a Market Match program. Groups operating farmers' markets in communities with high concentrations of nutrition benefit recipients would be given priority in the receipt of these grants. By fulfilling the requirements for the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grants under Section 4208 in the 2014 federal Farm Bill, California will be positioned to attract federal funds to help expand these programs throughout California.

STATUS

04/10/2014: Re-referred to Asm. Rules Committee

SUPPORT

Roots of Change (Sponsor)

STAFF CONTACT

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