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September 17, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture has been very proactive in working to reduce food insecurity within the state. The challenge is not a small one, currently more than six million Californians experience food insecurity on an annual basis. We believe that enhancing and expanding a tax credit for food donations to food banks, as proposed by Assembly Bill 515, would be strong step forward to combating hunger in our state.

AB 515 not only expands the eligibility of the food donation tax credit to include a greater diversity of food products (tree nuts, dairy, rice, processed foods, meats, etc.) but also increases the credit amount from 10 percent to 15 percent of the qualified value. This is an important incentive to help minimize food waste in the fields and make a positive impact on communities and individuals in need.

Recently, the Obama Administration set a national goal to reduce food waste by 50 percent over the next 15 years. As part of this initiative, grocery chains have indicated they will work to divert more perishable food to hunger-relief organizations. Our Board's partnership with the California Association of Food Banks to double farm contributions to food banks also aligns with this national commitment – reducing food waste that occurs in the fields.

Over the last few years California has taken significant strides to help reduce food insecurity. Local communities have worked successfully to increase participation in the CalFresh program, local farmers' markets have flourished throughout the state and farm donations to food banks are on the rise. AB 515 will continue this great progress and help us reduce hunger in our state.

Sincerely,

Craig McNamara
President

cc: Secretary Karen Ross, Department of Food and Agriculture

