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Contact: Tracey Patterson (CFPA)
tracey@cfpa.net

Christina Burns (No Kid Hungry)
cburns@mercuryllc.com

**California Food Policy Advocates and No Kid Hungry Applaud
Governor Brown's Signature on McGuire Anti-Hunger Bill**
SB 138 Will Help Connect 650,000 More Low-Income Kids to Free School Meals

Sacramento, CA – Anti-hunger organizations California Food Policy Advocates and No Kid Hungry today applauded Governor Jerry Brown for signing Senate Bill 138 by State Senator Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg). By using existing Medi-Cal data to automatically certify students for free and reduced-price school meals, SB 138 is expected to help paperlessly connect 650,000 more low-income students to free school meals, ensure access to universally free school meals in hundreds of high-poverty schools and bring approximately \$15 million in federal funds to California.

"School meals are extremely effective at fighting the devastating effects of child hunger, and SB 138 expands the reach of these programs in a way that allows hard-working parents and school staff to focus on what matters most: child health," said California Food Policy Advocates Executive Director George Manalo-LeClair. "We are proud to have sponsored SB 138, and we are grateful for Senator McGuire's leadership in championing this important issue and Governor Brown's signature on this bill."

Currently, parents generally fill out paper forms to certify that their children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Until now, California has underutilized options to paperlessly enroll low-income students into school meals. Although California has struggled to improve its enrollment of eligible low-income families into CalFresh, the state has been extremely successful in expanding Medi-Cal enrollment among all eligible children – so directly and seamlessly certifying these students for free meals helps ensure that fewer kids fall through the cracks and more kids access healthy school meals.

"Ending child hunger is possible, and smart strategies like ensuring that more kids start the day with a nutritious breakfast can make a big difference for students' academic achievement, their overall health and well-being and their success in life," said No Kid Hungry California State Director Kathy Saile. "By enacting SB 138, California has taken an important step toward helping our students get the healthy food they need to succeed in school and beyond."

Today, 1 in 5 kids in California struggle with hunger, and a recent report by No Kid Hungry revealed that 3 out of 4 teachers see students who regularly come to school hungry. Teachers say this takes a toll on students' academic performance as well; 80 percent see a loss of concentration, 62 percent see behavioral and discipline problems and nearly half see sicker and less healthy students. SB 138 addresses this issue by not only certifying more students for free and reduced-price meals, but also by calling upon high-poverty schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students.

Last year, 14 California school districts piloted direct certification with great success, enrolling more than 40,000 new students into free school meal programs. SB 138 will go into effect on January 1, 2018.

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About California Food Policy Advocates

For 25 years, California Food Policy Advocates has been the leading 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. Learn more at CFPA.net.

About No Kid Hungry

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 5 kids will face hunger this year. Using proven, practical solutions, No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger today by ensuring that kids start the day with a nutritious breakfast and families learn the skills they need to shop and cook on a budget. When we all work together, we can make sure kids get the healthy food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength. Join us at NoKidHungry.org.