**AB 2153 (Arambula) Sample Support Letter**

**AB 2153 (Arambula)** will expand California Fruit and Vegetable Supplemental Benefits to be available to hundreds of thousands of households across the state. This will, in the short-term, help families afford the foods they need to stay healthy, cushion the CalFresh benefits cliff looming as pandemic-era Emergency Allotments expire, and help alleviate the economic strain farmers are currently facing. In the long-term, it will position the program to become permanently available to CalFresh families throughout California. It is a “win-win-win” that reduces hunger, improves public health, and boosts California’s agricultural economy.

**How you can help:** Submit a letter in support of AB 2153. Use this sample letter or write your own letter outlining the importance of this bill. After submitting your letter, please share your support via social media, emails, calls, and meetings.

**Please submit your letter by 12pm, Mar 16, 2022**

**Email letters to** [**grayson.doucette@asm.ca.gov**](mailto:grayson.doucette@asm.ca.gov)**;** [**jared@nourishca.org**](mailto:jared@nourishca.org)**; and gmarquez-nieblas@spur.org**

**and/or**

**submit directly through the State’s online Advocate Portal for Legislative Position Letters:**

[**https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/**](https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/)

**\*NOTE: You will need to create an account for yourself/your organization to upload letters through the portal.**

**Organizations: please be sure to submit your letter on letterhead.**

**Individuals: please be sure to include your mailing address in your letter.**

**Questions?** Contact Jared Call at [jared@nourishca.org](mailto:jared@nourishca.org)

**[PLACE YOUR ORGANIZATION’S LETTERHEAD]**

**[Date]**

The Honorable Lisa Calderon

Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee

Legislative Office Building

1020 N Street, Room 124

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Support for AB 2153 (Arambula)—California Fruit and Vegetable Supplemental Benefits Expansion**

Dear Chairperson Calderon,

**[I am/Name of your organization is]** writing in support of AB 2153 (Arambula), which would expand the number and geographic diversity of retailers offering fruit and vegetable supplemental benefits to CalFresh participants. Thank you for your leadership to ensure our state’s nutrition safety net is adequate and equitable.

As the state continues to weather the COVID pandemic and our current drought, California families are facing high rates of hunger and inequitable access to food while California farmers are struggling against stiff economic headwinds. The state must seize the opportunity of a historic budget surplus to boost CalFresh benefits while supporting California’s agricultural sector.

Californians with low income are food insecure and can’t make ends meet.

* As of early 2022, one of every ten adults in California report that they struggle to consistently put enough food on their table.[[1]](#footnote-1) This very high rate of food insecurity exists even with the CalFresh program providing food assistance to between 4-5 million Californians.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* According to a [recent statewide survey](https://nourishca.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Hardship-and-Hope-for-Change-2021-Nourish-CA-slides-final.pdf), three in four Californians with low or moderate income worried about running out of food in the past year. And three in five actually did run out of food.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* Research demonstrates that current CalFresh benefits alone do not provide enough money for families to meet the USDA’s nutrition and dietary guidelines for fruits and vegetables.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* During the pandemic, most CalFresh households have received a temporary boost in CalFresh benefits through federally-authorized “Emergency Allotments.” When those boosts expire, most households will face a “benefits cliff” as their monthly allotments are drastically reduced. The state must explore every way to cushion the blow to prevent further spikes in hunger and hardship.
* CalFresh households’ purchasing patterns often don’t reflect the foods they need, want, or find culturally appropriate. Shopping decisions are shaped mostly by high prices and limited access, which restricts their choices.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* Among Californians with low income, 29 percent report that they can only sometimes find affordable fruits and vegetables in their neighborhood and 3 percent report they never can.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Fruit and vegetable supplemental benefit programs, which provide CalFresh participants with matching dollars when they buy California-grown fruits and vegetables, make food more affordable while also supporting California farmers. Numerous organizations have piloted these initiatives, also commonly known as healthy food incentive programs, at grocery stores and farmers’ markets in California. Evaluations from those programs in California, and others nationally, show that they reduce hunger, improve health, and boost the agricultural economy.

Expanding California Fruit and Vegetable Supplemental Benefits to be available to hundreds of thousands of households across the state will, in the short-term, help families afford the foods they need to stay healthy and help alleviate the economic strain farmers are currently facing. In the long-term, it will position the program to become permanently available to CalFresh families throughout California. It is a “win-win-win” that reduces hunger, improves public health, and boosts California’s agricultural economy.

**[If you would like to, insert your own reason(s) for supporting AB 2153 here.]**

For these reasons, we strongly support AB 2153, and urge your ‘aye’ vote to boost CalFresh benefits while supporting a strong California agricultural economy.

Sincerely,

**[Your name and title]**

**[Your organization, if applicable]**

cc: Members, Assembly Human Services Committee

Jared Call, Nourish California (sponsor)

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas, SPUR (co-sponsor)

1. US Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, “Food Scarcity - Week 41 (December 29, 2021 – January 10, 2022)”:https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?measures=FOODSCARCE&periodSelector=41&s\_state=00006 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. CalFresh Data Dashboard, CalFresh Persons - Monthly Participation (as of Nov 2021): https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/data-portal/research-and-data/calfresh-data-dashboard [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Nourish California and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3), 2021, available at https://nourishca.org/event/food-hardship-hope-for-change/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mulik, Kranti et al., “The Affordability of MyPlate: An Analysis of SNAP Benefits and the Actual Cost of Eating According to the DietaryGuidelines”, Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, Vol. 49, Issue 8 (September 2017), 623 – 631. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “More Adequate SNAP Benefits Would Help Millions of Participants Better Afford Food,” July2021: https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/more-adequate-snap-benefits-would-help-millions-of-participants-better [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2015 California Health Interview Survey: http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/chis/Pages/default.aspx.Low-income defined as households up to 200% of the federal poverty level. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)