



February 1, 2021

Senator Bob Wieckowski  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Richard Bloom  
Chair Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Anna Caballero  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #4  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Phil Ting  
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Supporting early action emergency relief funding and technical assistance for underserved small and medium scale farmers (California Department of Food and Agriculture and Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development)**

Dear Chairs Wieckowski, Bloom, Skinner, Caballero, Carrillo and Ting,

Thank you for your continued support and leadership during the pandemic, particularly your efforts to support the food & farming system. We the undersigned farmers are writing to highlight the importance of urgent relief efforts to help farmers access state resources as well as support from culturally and linguistically appropriate technical assistance. As the pandemic enters into its eleventh month, many of us continue to struggle to keep our farms operational and begin to plan for an uncertain future. This pandemic has resulted in loss of markets, unpredictability of markets, and the inability for some of us to sell our products.

**Technical Assistance for Historically Underserved Farmers**

We strongly support Governor Newsom's proposed funding to provide urgently needed technical assistance to small farmers. The Governor proposes to allocate \$3.35 million in the 2020-21 (early action) budget to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) for the University of California Cooperative Extension to provide direct technical assistance and grants to technical assistance providers and small, mid-sized, and underserved farmers. We come from a wide range of ethnic, cultural, and generational backgrounds with 19 percent--nearly 1 in 5--of California's agricultural producers are socially disadvantaged. As many in our community have experienced first hand, the distribution of many grants and loans facilitated through federal or state initiatives [fail to meet the needs of farmers that speak English as a second language](#), have limited access to broadband or the technology needed to complete the required application materials. As highlighted in the [report](#) released last year by

CDFA's first-ever Farm Equity Advisor (a position created by legislation championed by [Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry](#)), language-appropriate technical assistance is a top priority and necessary investment to make progress towards racial justice. Providing on-the ground support through trusted and experienced partner organizations, allow for a greater opportunity to access resources in ways that are appropriate and fair, given the diversity of our education, culture, and language.

This support will assist farmers to gain access to the newly available federal funding through the Emergency Coronavirus Relief Act of 2020 which aims to allocate \$11 billion to support local and regional food systems. In addition to the urgent TA funding, we also strongly support the additional \$3.35m the Governor proposes for FY 2021-22 for CDFA as an investment in the Small Farm Advisors program at the University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources for grants to NGOs, farmers, and a small farm specialist at CDFA. We appreciate the leadership of Senator Eggman who has championed efforts to lift up these exact investment needs.

### **State Pandemic Relief for Small Farmers**

In California more than 80 percent of farms operate on less than 180 acres and nearly three-fourths operate on less than \$100,000 in annual sales. We have witnessed this pandemic disproportionately impacting our state's small-scale farmers and in particular historically underserved farmers of color. At the onset of the pandemic farms and local food hubs lost 30 - 90 percent of their business as food service shut down. CAFF estimated that there was at least \$51 million less in farm-to-school purchasing, and more than \$106 million in economic loss to the state, in the first few months (March -May 2020) of the pandemic. According to an economic study commissioned by the Farm Bureau, it is estimated that the 2020 pandemic-related losses to California's agriculture sector ranged between \$5.9 billion and \$8.6 billion. Our community of small-scale farmers get by on small margins and are in need of emergency relief and long-term support to get through these difficult times as well as to form a more equitable food system. We support the state financial relief efforts for small businesses including Governor Newsom's proposed increases to the COVID Relief Grant program for small businesses and nonprofits (administered by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate) and also the larger in the Keep California Working Act (SB 74). These are critical efforts to keep small businesses, and particularly vulnerable small-scale farms, afloat.

### **Climate Smart Agriculture**

**We support Governor Newsom's proposed investments in CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture** programs including State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program (SWEEP) with a proposed allocation of \$20 million, and the Healthy Soils Program (HSP) proposed allocation of \$15 million in the 2020-21 early action budget. (We also support the proposed \$15 million in FY 2021-22.) SWEEP and HSP have been instrumental in providing valuable technical assistance and grant funding support to reduce water use, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and promote biodiversity on California's agricultural lands. These programs are not only essential climate change solutions they are highly sought-after grants among farmers. The 2020 HSP round was record breaking with 614 applications submitted and only about half accepted in part due to limited funding.

We hope that you will support these critical emergency action initiatives highlighted above that help to make our farms more resilient in these uncertain times. Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

Sincerely,

Rachel Sullivan, Frog Hollow Farm, Contra Costa County  
Wendy Krupnick, Chiatra de Laguna Farm, Sonoma County  
Evan Kirby-Smith, Rancho Organico, Riverside County  
Guillermo Lazaro, Ald & Y Organic Farm, Monterey County  
Judith Humburg, Pie Ranch and Fifth Crow Farms, San Mateo County  
Jill Klein, Matthiasson Family Vineyards, Napa County  
Gregory Fite. Merriman Properties LLC, Alameda County  
Alison Trotta-Marshall. Marshall's Farm Honey, Napa County  
Angie Pettitt-Taylor, Outer Sunset Farmers Market & Mercantile, San Francisco County  
Adriana Murguia, Sacramento County  
Mindy Ramos, Salton Sea Farms, Riverside County  
Eniko Torneby, Torneby Vineyard, Sonoma County  
Kathy Les, Flowers For Food, Sacramento County  
Dawnie Andrak, Irish Tim's Produce, Sacramento County  
Jana Mariposa Muhar, Mariposa Habitat Nursery and Farm, Sonoma County  
Erin Shea. Blossom and Bine, Sonoma County  
Gwen K Koda, Shinta Kawahara Company, Santa Cruz County  
Vince Trotter, Kibo Farm, Sonoma County  
Rod Koda, Shinta Kawahara Company, Santa Cruz County  
Milton Whaley, Singing Frog Farm, Sonoma County  
Carla Rosin, Sebastopol Farmers' Market, Sonoma County  
Amon Muller, Full Belly Farm, Yolo County  
Sara Bernal, West Sacramento Urban Farm, Sacramento County  
Erin Tormey, Farm Fatales of Irish Ridge Ranch, San Mateo County  
Connie Madden, Oasis Community Farm, Sonoma County  
Hilary Applegate, Soil Aerobics, Nevada County  
Vicki Williams, Williams Family Sustainable Farm, Sutter and Yolo Counties  
Sami Jadallah, Jadallah Ranch, Yolo County  
Tucker Taylor, Jackson Family Gardens (Wines), Sonoma County  
Jennifer Herren, Saltwater Farm, Ventura County  
Lynette Buchanan, Rancho Tierra Dulce, Ventura County  
Cara Mae Woledge, Napa Farmers Market, Napa County  
Scott G. Sterner, North Bay Shellfish LLC, Humboldt County  
Christine Coke, Coke Farms, San Benito County  
Matthew Martin, Pyramid Farms, Butte County  
Terra Palacios, ELA Farmers Market, Los Angeles County  
Jayne Battey, Miramar Farms, San Mateo County  
Aaron De La Cerda, Acta Non Verba, Alameda County  
Autumn Feral, Feral Family Farm, Humboldt County  
Colleen Fong, Full Belly Farm, Yolo County  
Maria Romero, Ambrosio Organic, Santa Cruz County  
Emily Taylor, PT Ranch, Amador County  
Ave Lambert, Capay gold olive oil, Yolo County  
Katie Ikard, Fox & Rye Farm, San Luis Obispo County  
Matthew Wilson Plasek, Blue Dot Farm, Sonoma County

Melinda Mills, Wildforest Sanctuary, Sonoma County  
Patricia Koren, Eatwell Farm, Solano County  
Martin Avina, Avina Organic Farms, Monterey County  
Cher Xiong, Cher Farm, Fresno County  
Ofelia Lichtenheld, Hummingbird Agrotek, LLC, San Diego County  
Joey Smith, Let's Go Farm, Sonoma County  
Laurel Harris, Mt. St. John Organic Farm, Napa County  
Steve Lock, Lock Vineyard and Ecluse Wines, San Luis Obispo County  
Layla Aguilar, Eames Ranch, Sonoma County  
Dan Urbaniak, St. Eva Hill Vineyard, San Luis Obispo  
Rebecca Canright, Comeback Farm Organic Produce, Placer County  
Bill Nunes, Contented Acres Produce, Merced County  
Lisen Bonnier, Vintage Organics, San Luis Obispo County  
Kaben Kramer, Tenderlyrooted, Butte County  
Terry & Carolyn Harrison, Sonoma County  
Arden Bucklin, Oak Hill Farm, Sonoma County  
Linda Easton-Waller, GullyRumpus Farm, Sacramento County  
Megan Young, Chroma Farm, Yolo County  
Fred Marken, Colestine Organic Farm, Siskiyou County  
Ruthie King, Headwaters. Mendocino County  
Lee James, Tierra Vegetables, Sonoma County  
Stephanie Lucas, Nautilus Ridge Farm, Lake County  
Drea Lanctot, Elkhorn Herbals Plant Nursery, Del Norte County  
Randy Stannard, Root 64 Sacramento, Sacramento County  
Shail Pec-Crouse, Tule Fog Farm, Humboldt County  
Liangqian Chen, K&J Farm, Santa Clara County

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Dee Dee Myers, Director, GO-Biz  
Senator Andreas Borgeas, Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee  
Assemblymember Robert Rivas, Chair, Assembly Agriculture Committee  
Senator Susan Eggman  
Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry  
Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris