



**AB 125: The Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms and Worker Protection Bond Act**

**SUMMARY**

Assembly Bill 125 will place the Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms and Worker Protection Bond Act before the voters in 2022. This bond includes \$3.122 billion in investments that will accelerate California’s economic recovery and improve the state’s climate resilience while also increasing healthy food access, protecting essential food and farm system workers, investing in regional food processing and market infrastructure, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

**BACKGROUND**

The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the vulnerabilities of California's communities, exacerbating food insecurity and exposing essential frontline workers to disproportionate health risks. The impacts of the pandemic have been many and diverse, and have fallen heavily on people of color, including the farmworker communities who harvest our food and essential workers throughout our food supply chains. Shattered food supply chains have resulted in farm products rotting in the fields as millions of Californians go hungry. It is clear that we need to invest in the food and farming systems in California to combat hunger, create and restore jobs, support agricultural businesses, and build resilient communities.

**PROBLEM**

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored numerous challenges in the state that require swift and ongoing action. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of food-insecure Californians increased by 2.1 million, for a total of 6.4 million food insecure people in the state.<sup>1</sup> Food banks do not have the means or resources to provide for the increasing number of hungry Californians, while some crops remain in the fields because of failed supply chains. Meanwhile farmers who relied on restaurant and institutional markets experienced a 50 percent loss in markets at the beginning of the pandemic and continue to

experience volatile markets.<sup>2</sup> Restaurants and other food businesses have been decimated by the pandemic and many will likely remain closed post-pandemic. Farmworkers, many of whom live in overcrowded conditions, have been especially vulnerable to contracting COVID-19. One recent study found that Monterey County farmworkers were three times more likely to contract the coronavirus compared to other workers in the county.<sup>3</sup> These bleak realities require judicious and ongoing support from the state.

**SOLUTION**

The time is now to scale up just solutions to bolster economic recovery and withstand a looming climate crisis. Assembly Bill 125 will strengthen recovery efforts by bringing jobs to our communities, protect our essential frontline workers, and create a secure and resilient food and farming system. The bond will invest in four main areas:

- **\$600 million** for regional and local food processing, distribution, and market infrastructure. California needs many more food hubs to aggregate supply from producers, as well as food processing, meat processing and livestock slaughter facilities, cold storage, and distribution facilities – all with an eye towards building sustainable and resilient local and regional food systems.
- **\$637 million** for farmworker safety and well-being. This bond addresses farmworker health and safety such as safe and affordable housing, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on farmworker homes, and personal protective equipment for wildfires and COVID.
- **\$750 million** for infrastructure to combat hunger - With an estimated 6.4 million food insecure Californians, improves food access for the most vulnerable Californians to combat hunger.
- **\$1.135 billion** for sustainable agriculture, on-farm climate resilience and biodiversity and

<sup>1</sup> See: [https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Brief\\_Local%20Impact\\_5.19.2020.pdf](https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Brief_Local%20Impact_5.19.2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> #FarmersFeedtheNeed – a coordinated effort to provide food to needy Californians. April 30, 2020. CDFA blog. <https://plantingseedsblog.cdfa.ca.gov/wordpress/?p=21213>

<sup>3</sup> Increased Risks and Fewer Jobs: Evidence of California Farmworker Vulnerability During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Villarejo, D. July 25, 2020. CIRS. [https://www.cirsinc.org/phocadownload/farmworker\\_vulnerability\\_covid-19\\_research-report\\_final\\_villarejo\\_07-26-2020.pdf](https://www.cirsinc.org/phocadownload/farmworker_vulnerability_covid-19_research-report_final_villarejo_07-26-2020.pdf)



**AB 125: The Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms and Worker Protection Bond Act**

---

compost facilities — Diverse, organic, and regenerative cropping systems help reduce farmers’ economic vulnerabilities by expanding market opportunities. These investments also modernize fairground infrastructure, protect groundwater resources, generate more compost, rebuild soil health and improve on-farm resilience to droughts, floods, and pest outbreaks.

Together, these important efforts will accelerate our state’s economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while combating climate change, improving food security, and protecting our essential food and farm system workers.

---

**SUPPORT**

Agriculture Institute of Marin  
American Farmland Trust  
California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)  
California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN)  
Californians for Pesticide Reform  
Carbon Cycle Institute  
Center for Food Safety  
Central California Environmental Justice Network  
Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Intertribal Agriculture Council  
Monterey Bay Central Labor Council  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Pesticide Action Network  
Roots of Change  
Sustainable Agriculture Education  
UFCW Western States Council

---

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Dylan Lomanto, *Legislative Aide*  
Email: [Dylan.Lomanto@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Dylan.Lomanto@asm.ca.gov)  
Cell: (831) 902-9259