



CAFF

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
with FAMILY FARMERS

April 19, 2021

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
State Capitol, Room 4140
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 778 (Garcia) – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Garcia,

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) has represented small and mid-scale family farmers in California for over 40 years, seeking to preserve family-scale agriculture, promote local food systems, and advance environmental sustainability. We are pleased to support your AB 778, which would require all state-owned and state-run institutions to purchase California-grown agricultural products, unless they are not grown in California or not available due to seasonality.

With the incorporation of AB 1025 into this bill, AB 778 now seems to qualify the Buy-California requirement by limiting it to products whose California bid price is within 25% of foreign prices, but it seems to be silent on bid prices from other parts of the country. This 25% proposal would certainly be an improvement over the current law, which requires the California price to be within 5% of non-California prices, but the bill needs to be amended to clarify that it applies to any product bid from outside California.

CAFF has for many years supported every attempt to require state institutions to buy California agricultural products. Usually schools at all levels are exempted from these bills, which is unfortunate because of the large amount of food they purchase. Enough progress has been on local food purchasing in California schools and universities that we believe it is proper to include them and we encourage you to resist likely efforts to remove them.

Integrating state food purchasing with California's local food systems will provide economic benefits to rural areas and ensure high quality food for our institutions. We would ask you to consider amending the bill to encourage these institutions to purchase a part of the food from small and socially disadvantaged farmers and firms, as this would expand the benefits of the bill.

Thank you for carrying this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Runsten".

David Runsten
Policy Director