

April 7, 2022

The Honorable Andreas Borgeas
Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee
1020 N Street, Room 583
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 907 (Pan) LEAF: Local Equitable Access to Food - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Borgeas:

On behalf of SPUR, I am writing in support of SB 907, which would establish a non-competitive grant program to expand access to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) services at all certified farmers' markets across California.

It is important that CalFresh recipients be able to spend their food assistance dollars at the retailers they choose, including farmers' markets. In the current system, farmers' markets that do offer EBT access typically find that additional administrative and technical assistance – a dedicated employee who can help with accounting and reporting – is needed to fully offer and reap the benefits of EBT access. Because administrative costs can add up and farmers' markets operate on such thin margins, many farmers' markets do not go through the process of offering EBT access and those that are successful in doing so struggle to maintain the staffing required to continue offering that access.

SB 907 would establish a non-competitive grant program, developed by the Department of Food and Agriculture and supported by the Department of Social Services, to support EBT access and staffing at farmers' markets. Grant funding could also be used to scale and improve EBT processes at existing farmers' markets, establish EBT access at new certified markets in under-served low-income communities, assist non-certified farmers' markets with certification, and develop nutrition education programs and outreach efforts to local communities.

This legislation also complements current efforts to expand fruit and vegetable supplemental benefits to CalFresh participants, via the EBT system, at farmers markets and grocery stores statewide – which helps increase purchasing power of Californians with low-incomes and, especially at farmers' markets, supports small and mid-scale farmers.

For these reasons, SPUR supports SB 907 and respectfully requests your “aye” vote on this bill.

Sincerely,



Eli Zigas
Food & Agriculture Policy Director

CC: Marlon Lara, Office of Senator Dr. Pan (Author)
Tiffany Germain, NextGen California (Sponsor)
Sam Greenlee and Emma Burke, Alchemist CDC (Sponsor)