

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0030
(916) 319-2030
FAX (916) 319-2130

E-MAIL
Assemblymember.RRivas@assembly.ca.gov



DISTRICT OFFICE
60 WEST MARKET STREET, SUITE 110
SALINAS, CA 93901
(831) 759-8676
FAX (831) 759-2961
525 MONTEREY STREET
SOLEDAD, CA 93960
17555 PEAK AVENUE, SUITE 100
MORGAN HILL, CA 95037
(831) 256-1272
2301 TECHNOLOGY PARKWAY, 1ST FLOOR
HOLLISTER, CA 95023
(831) 630-1330

March 31, 2022

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President Pro Tempore of the Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Philip Y. Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub. No. 1
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, Senate Budget Sub. No. 1
1021 O Street, Suite 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Kevin McCarty
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub. No. 2
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski
Chair, Senate Budget Sub. No. 2
1021 O Street, Suite 6530
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Bloom
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub. No. 3
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable Susan Eggman
Chair, Senate Budget Sub. No. 3
1021 O Street, Suite 8530
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub. No. 4
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable Sydney Kamlager
Chair, Senate Budget Sub. No. 4
1021 O Street, Suite 6510
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Cristina Garcia
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub. No. 5
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable María Elena Durazo
Chair, Senate Budget Sub. No. 5
1021 O Street, Suite 7530
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for \$423,500,000 in Investments in Food & Farming Climate Resilience

Dear Speaker Rendon, Pro Tem Atkins, Assembly Budget Chair Ting, Senate Budget Chair Skinner, Assembly Budget Subcommittee Chairs Arambula, McCarty, Bloom, Carrillo, Garcia, and Senate Budget Subcommittee Chairs Laird, Wieckowski, Eggman, Kamlager, and Durazo,

We write to request \$423.5 million from the state budget's General Fund for fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023 to support the economic viability and climate resilience of our food and farming system. California must build on last year's historic investments in our food and farming systems while scaling up equitable solutions to the climate crisis that bring jobs to our communities, protect our essential frontline workers, and create a secure and resilient food supply.

The climate crisis poses a significant threat to California's agricultural economy. Increased temperatures, more frequent and severe droughts, increases in pathogens in agricultural fields, and devastating wildfires are just a few of the new realities affecting the state's agriculture industry. The impacts of the climate crisis are already far-reaching and severe for farmers, farmworkers, and consumers of agricultural products. A few examples include:

- The 2020-2021 drought was the second driest two-year period on record in California, costing our state's agricultural economy an unprecedented \$1.7 billion and over 14,000 jobs.¹
- By 2050, due to increased temperatures and decreased winter chill hours, almonds, table grapes, oranges, and walnuts crop yields are expected to decline by 20 percent in California, while avocados will decline by 40 percent.²
- Farmers and farmworkers face significant losses and economic hardships in loss crop yields and workdays as they endure a greater risk of wildfire smoke, chemical residue and ash due to long hours working outdoors.³
- Meanwhile, the pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity in the state, increasing the number of food-insecure Californians to a record eight million residents.⁴ The climate crisis threatens to further exacerbate food insecurity in the years and decades to come unless we act now to increase our food and farm resilience.

Ignoring the climate crisis will have devastating impacts on the agriculture industry in the long-term as we continue to bear the short-term impacts of the climate crisis. Scaling up innovative

¹ California Dept. of Food and Agriculture, Office of Public Affairs. 2022. "CDFA-Funded Research Finds That in 2021, Drought Cost Ag Industry More than \$1 Billion as Well as Thousands of Jobs." CDFA's Planting Seeds Blog. February 24, 2022. <https://plantingseedsblog.cdfa.ca.gov/wordpress/?p=24065>.

² "Climate Threats to Agriculture." CalCAN. <https://calclimateag.org/climatethreatstoag/>.

³ Schilli, Kara. 2019. "Wildfire Resources." Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety. July 26, 2019. <https://aghealth.ucdavis.edu/wildfires>.

⁴ "Hunger Data - California Association of Food Banks." <https://www.cafoodbanks.org/hunger-data/>.

programs and solutions in agriculture will help provide short- and long-term relief in combating the effects of climate change; some of its effects are prevalent today.

We support the proactive investment of available General Fund dollars for the projects outlined below. This budget request builds on the investments proposed in AB 125 (R. Rivas, 2021), the Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms and Worker Protection Act. This effort garnered bi-partisan support and had more 160 local government, public health, food access, and agriculture groups in support, among others. This effort began at a time of budget deficits during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, not in the era of projected surpluses that we are experiencing today.

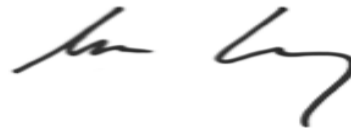
Below we offer our recommendations on FY 2022-23 investments in the climate and economic resilience of our food and farming system. Should you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly. Your staff can also reach Steven Jimenez in my office at (831) 261-9491 or Steven.Jimenez@asm.ca.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



ROBERT RIVAS
Assemblymember, 30th District



ADAM GRAY
Assemblymember, 21st District



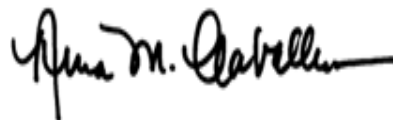
CECILIA AGUIAR-CURRY
Assemblymember, 4th District



EDUARDO GARCIA
Assemblymember, 56th District



CARLOS VILLAPUDUA
Assemblymember, 13th District



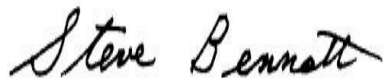
ANNA CABALLERO
Senator, 12th District



MARC LEVINE
Assemblymember, 10th District



MONIQUE LIMÓN
Senator, 19th District



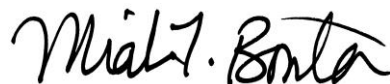
STEVE BENNETT
Assemblymember, 37th District



ASH KALRA
Assemblymember, 27th District



JIM WOOD
Assemblymember, 2nd District



MIA BONTA
Assemblymember, 18th District

Department of Conservation: \$155.5 million

- **Farmland Conservation: \$100 million** - Grants for the protection and enhancement of agricultural lands, including the acquisition of fee title or conservation easements that improve climate resilience by protecting agricultural lands that support pollinator habitat, California native biodiversity, flood protection, and groundwater recharge.
- **Land Access and Tenure Grants: \$25 million** – Funding to improve land access and tenure for socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- **Regional Farmer Training Centers: \$15 million** - Grants to develop and expand regional farmer training centers that provide culturally relevant assistance for socially disadvantaged farmers, beginning farmers, and farmworkers.
- **Tribal Consultation: \$500,000** – Funding to develop a process with tribes to determine where traditional tribal lands are located for the purpose of offering tribes the first right of refusal to purchase the land and develop a collaborative management processes for land management consistent with tribal goals and access rights.
- **Tribal Resource Conservation Districts and Resource Conservation Districts: \$15 million** – Funding to hire and train Resource Conservation Districts and Tribal Resource Conservation Districts staff with expertise in organic and sustainable agriculture, conservation planning, climate resilience and mitigation management, and culturally competent provision of services to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Department of Food and Agriculture: \$90 million

- **Biological Control/Insectaries Infrastructure: \$2 million** – Infrastructure grants to construct insectaries that produce beneficial organisms in support of ecologically integrated pest management.
- **Climate-Friendly Healthy Food Access Infrastructure: \$50 million** – Funding to create a new competitive grant program to fund the development of food and farm related infrastructure, and implement training and workforce development that aims to shorten the farm to table distance to ensure communities and tribes are able to produce, process, distribute, or obtain healthy, nutrient-dense, culturally relevant foods with certified organic or other climate-friendly practices.
- **Organic Transition Program: \$5 million** – Funding for organic agriculture transition pilot program to support underserved producers, including smaller scale farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. These funds administered through a pilot program will help farmers access financial and technical assistance during the three-year transition to organic certification (as required by the National Organic Program).
- **Prescribed Grazing Infrastructure: \$8 million** - Grants for farmers and ranchers to install prescribed grazing infrastructure, including fencing and water stations, to support wildfire prevention, improved livestock management, and biodiversity enhancement.
- **Tribal Resources: \$15 million** - Grants for tribal agriculture and food system managers and food inspectors. This effort is intended to support tribal governments and organizations in hiring Agricultural or Food System Managers and tribal Food Inspectors to further food sovereignty initiatives.

- **University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE): \$10 million** – Funding to the UCCE to hire farm advisors, community educators and extension specialists with specialties in certified organic agriculture, small farm advising, and climate resilience and mitigation management.

Department of Community Services and Development: \$25 million

- **Farmworker Housing Component of the Low-Income Home Weatherization Program: \$25 million** – Funds to provide new HVAC systems (for heating, cooling and filtering pesticide-contaminated air), energy efficiency measures and solar installation on existing farmworker housing. These investments are critical and can be used to address heat exposure issues for essential workers while achieving energy savings and emission reductions.

CAL FIRE: \$5 million

- **Prescribed and Cultural Burns Infrastructure: \$5 million** - Grants for tribal governments and tribal organizations to fund equipment, storage to support prescribed and cultural burns as wildfire prevention strategies, especially on rangelands and other food-producing lands. Investments such as these are a vital preventative measure in protecting farmlands from devastating and costly wildfires.

Department of Housing and Community Development: \$125 million

- **Farmworker Housing Set Aside: \$25 million** – Fund an additional \$25 million in tax credits within the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to increase production of affordable farmworker housing.
- **Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant program: \$100 million** – Grants for the development of multi-unit, family housing for farmworker families and households.

Department of Water Resources: \$10 million

- **SGMA Implementation for Small Farmers: \$10 million** – Grants to UC Cooperative Extension, Resource Conservation Districts and Tribal Conservation Districts, nonprofits, and other qualified Ag professionals to conduct outreach and education to small farmers about the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and its requirements.

Office of Emergency Services: \$12 million

- **Public Health Notification System: \$12 million** – Funding to expand the California State Warning Center to include targeted alerts for public health dangers for farmworkers and other essential workers.

Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery: \$1 million

- **Farmers and Ranchers Illegal Dumping: \$ 1 million** – Funds to expand, by an additional \$1 million, the Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Account to establish a pilot program for farmers and ranchers to receive direct funds for the cleanup of illegal dumpsites on agriculture lands.