



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

September 9, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 1419 (Rubio)—Food Desert Elimination Grant Program

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), I urge your signature on SB 1419. This bill aims to expand access to healthy foods in food deserts by establishing the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program.

People in low-income communities and some racial and ethnic groups often lack access to convenient places that offer affordable, healthier food. According to the [2019 Long Beach Community Health Assessment](#), nearly 20 percent of adults in Long Beach do not have easy access to fresh produce. Communities with high concentrations of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores have been shown to have higher rates of obesity and diabetes, which can lead to other chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, and arthritis.

SB 1419 would authorize the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to collect nonstate, federal, and private funds to support grocery store operators seeking to locate grocery stores in food deserts. Under the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program, CDFA would award grants to support a market and site feasibility study; salaries and benefits to grocery store employees; rents or down payments to acquire a facility located in a food desert; and capital improvements, planning, renovations, land acquisition, demolition, and durable and nondurable equipment purchases.

The City supports policies and legislation that reduce barriers to accessing basic needs, including but not limited to healthy food options. SB 1419 is a critical step forward to addressing food insecurity across the state and promoting healthy eating to combat chronic diseases.

For these reasons, the City requests your signature on SB 1419.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 65th District
The Honorable Josh Lowenthal, State Assembly, 69th District