



March 12, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Swing Space, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
Swing Space, Room 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Steve Bennett
Chair, Assembly Subcommittee #4
Swing Space, Room 4710
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes
Chair, Senate Subcommittee #2
Swing Space, Room 7210
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Ongoing Funding for Edible Food Recovery

Each year 2.5 billion still-fresh, unsold meals are landfilled in California while one in five Californians do not have enough to eat. At the same time, recent federal funding delays and budget cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are straining California's food assistance system, reducing benefits for households and increasing demands on food assistance organizations across the state. Furthermore, rotting food and other organic waste in landfills emit significant amounts of methane, which is considered a "super greenhouse gas" because it is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere. The practice of throwing away food in landfills undercuts the state's goals of reducing the most harmful greenhouse gases (GHGs) and weakens efforts to improve food security for millions of Californians.

We write to respectfully request \$29 million in ongoing funding for the SB 1383 Local Assistance Grant Program and CalRecycle's Edible Food Recovery Grant Program to support jurisdictions and non-profit food recovery organizations. These funds are critically needed to cover operational and infrastructure costs, including transportation, cold storage equipment and staffing so that food recovery organizations can help achieve the goals of SB 1383: reducing methane emissions, improving air quality and reducing GHGs, and feeding people in our communities. In California, the estimated 2.5 billion edible meals disposed of each year equate to roughly 3 billion pounds of food. Based on typical food recovery costs of \$1.50–\$2.50 per pound, recovering this surplus alone would require an estimated \$4.5–\$7.5 billion annually for transportation, labor, storage, and coordination, highlighting the scale of investment needed to achieve our food recovery and climate goals.

Passed in 2016, SB 1383 requires edible food recovery to direct surplus edible food to food insecure communities rather than sending it to landfills. The goal is to recover 20 percent of edible food that would otherwise be disposed. Achieving this goal requires a steady investment because food recovery necessitates enormous work from both commercial edible food generators (hotels, restaurants, etc.) and food recovery organizations/services that provide food to people in our communities. Further, the state

law mandates annual data collection and reporting on all of these efforts, which is a significant lift for nonprofit food recovery organizations and local governments.

In prior years, CalRecycle provided grants as appropriated by the legislature to pay for food waste prevention and edible food recovery. Since 2018, CalRecycle has awarded \$28 million to 97 edible food recovery projects, which provided impressive results: 246 million meals or 295 million pounds of food redirected from landfills, 443 local jobs created, and GHG emission reductions equal to over 54,000 cars taken off the road. While CalRecycle's programs have often been funded through GGRF appropriations, they have also been funded by the General Fund. In the past two years, at a time when food insecurity is increasing, that funding has dried up. The last grant cycle was in FY 2022-23.

Specifically, we urge the Governor to allocate \$29 million annually to organic waste diversion grant programs at CalRecycle for the next five years. The existing SB 1383 Local Assistance Grant Program and the Edible Food Recovery Grant Program are among the most cost-effective expenditures, with a high ratio of GHG reduction per dollar, while simultaneously addressing food insecurity in our communities. With looming federal funding cuts to SNAP, this funding can help food banks and food recovery organizations, as they face a growing fiscal crisis along with unprecedented local need for food. Local governments are working hard with food recovery organizations to do this work, despite it not being adequately funded, which presents long-term challenges to meet the state's climate and equity goals. We strongly urge you to prioritize funding for food recovery grant programs.

Sincerely,

530 Food Rescue Coalition
Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet
Alameda County Community Food Bank
Bayview Senior Services
Berkeley Food Network
California Association of Food Banks
California Food Recovery Coalition
California State Association of Counties
Californians Against Waste
Careit
City of Livermore
City of Oakland
City of San Jose
Common Vision
Daily Bowl
Dorothy Day House
Environmental Innovations
ExtraFood

Food Connect Circle
Food Finders Inc.
Food of God (FOG)
FoodRecovery.org
Food Shift
Hunger at Home
I Love to Glean
Impact LA
LEAF
League of California Cities
Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen
Los Angeles Food Policy Council
Meals on Wheels, Orange County
No Time to Waste Food Recovery
NoHo Home Alliance
Open Heart Kitchen
Orange County United Way
ProduceGood
RecycleSmart | Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority
Recycling & Waste Reduction Commission of Santa Clara County
ReGen Monterey
San Lorenzo Family Help Center
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley
StopWaste
Tri-City Volunteers Inc, Food Bank + Mobile Pantry
Trybe
Upper Valley Agency Waste Management Agency
White Pony Express
Zero Waste Marin
Zero Waste Sonoma