



June 11, 2009

The Honorable Dean Florez
State Capitol, Room 313
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Florez:

As members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE), we are writing to express our opposition to any proposal that would eliminate the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). CRAE is a broad coalition of agriculture, environment, labor and public agency leaders working to promote an agriculture that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible.

We strongly urge the legislature to maintain an appropriate level of General Fund support for CDFA. And, to the extent cuts must be incurred, we recommend that they be done so on an unallocated basis and be aligned with the goals of the Ag Vision 2030 process.

CDFA plays a critical role in ensuring that California agriculture remains a strategic state, national and global resource that generates roughly \$100 billion in economic activity. As a provider of food, fiber, open space and, increasingly, renewable energy, agriculture's value to California far exceeds its direct economic contribution. CDFA's leadership is also needed to ensure a safe and accessible food supply; guard against invasive pests and diseases that threaten our state's economy and environment; reduce the threat of bio-terrorism; and help agriculture meet growing demands for ecosystem services and environmental stewardship. All Californians, in addition to our agricultural producers, benefit from this leadership.

Therefore, we welcome the opportunity to work with you to critically evaluate how the Department can more efficiently and effectively advance the interests of all actors in the food chain, from field to fork. Such a review should carefully consider the potential re-location of programs to the Department to improve food safety services, strengthen agricultural environmental stewardship, protect farmland, and coordinate the state's food purchasing programs to make a direct linkage between the nutrition needs of our citizens and the local production of our state's farmers and ranchers. It should furthermore ensure the close coordination with UC Cooperative Extension to leverage

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technical and scientific expertise.

In conclusion, CRAE recognizes that efficiencies in government must be implemented. However, the long-term viability of California's food production system is at stake. We urge you to maintain a Department of Food and Agriculture with an appropriate level of public funding.

Sincerely,

Ag Council of California
American Farmland Trust
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
California Association of Winegrape Growers
California Cattlemen's Association
California Certified Organic Farmers
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Federation of Certified Farmers Markets
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Cornelius Gallagher, Agribusiness Executive, Bank of America
Environmental Working Group
Great Valley Center
Markon Cooperative
Marrone Bio Innovations, Inc.
Natural Resources Defense Council
The Nature Conservancy
Richard E. Rominger
Roots of Change
San Joaquin Resource Conservation District
Sustainable Conservation
Western Growers
Western United Dairymen

cc: Members, Senate Food and Agriculture Committee
Members, Budget Conference Committee
Senator Dennis Hollingsworth
Assembly Member Cathleen Galgiani, Chair, Assembly Agriculture Committee
A.G. Kawamura, Secretary, Department of Food and Agriculture
Mike Genest, Director, Department of Finance
Ana Matosantos, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Finance
Robert Gore, Office of the Governor
John Moffatt, Office of the Governor
Mike Webb, Office of the Governor
Kip Lipper, Office of Senate President pro Tempore
Mary Kaems, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly