

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 9th, 2026

Photo Assets: [Link here](#)

Media Contact: Sara Leaverton

sara@ecologycenter.org

510-548-3402 x 230

As Federal SNAP Cuts Hit, State Budget Proposal Misses Opportunity to Keep Fresh Foods Affordable

Sacramento, CA — Federal HR1 cuts to SNAP (CalFresh) are reducing monthly nutrition benefits to an estimated 444,000 Californians. Market Match and the California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) address this by doubling shoppers' dollars when purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables directly from California farmers. At a time when need is skyrocketing, the Governor's proposed January budget did not include allocations to sustain this critical program. Without inclusion in the 2026/2027 budget, the program will run out of funds next year.

"California needs to ensure essential food resources are available for the thousands of Californians who rely on CalFresh and Market Match for fresh, healthy food at certified farmers' markets. Market Match helps to nourish our most vulnerable populations while providing economic stimulus to our small-scale farmers who play a crucial role in our state's agricultural landscape," said Assemblymember Damon Connolly, who represents the North Bay's 12th Assembly district.

Market Match helps CalFresh shoppers follow the new dietary recommendations of the USDA by making fresh food more affordable, and it can help close persistent crises in diet-related health issues like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. CNIP also supports other programs, including CalFresh access to extra farm-direct fruits and vegetables at a select number of small corner stores in low-income areas.

"I have a 5-year-old daughter with autism. She is very picky, and this program has allowed me to buy things and explore new veggies and fruits with her. She has tried so many new things just because of Market Match, and I'm very thankful! Market Match helps me have more money to last through the month. I really depend on it," said Iveliz Rodriguez of San Leandro, CA.

With recent federal changes under President Trump's HR1 already shrinking SNAP benefits, the absence of Market Match funding will further reduce families' ability to buy nutritious food. At the same time, small and mid-sized farmers—who rely on these purchases for stable, local sales—will lose a critical source of income. Research shows that these dollars have a 3-to-1

economic multiplier effect, sustaining farming families, workers, and the communities surrounding California's small farms.

In 2025, 627,597 Market Match shoppers spent \$22,467,928 in combined CalFresh at 303 market locations across 38 counties. The program delivered 44,935,856 servings of California-grown fruits and vegetables while keeping food dollars circulating in local farm economies throughout the State. The program is the financial backbone of many markets in low-income communities where fresh foods are otherwise scarce and overpriced.

"Being a specialty produce farmer, we see a majority of our sales income specifically from EBT, and two-thirds of those EBT users also use the Market Match. The Market Match program helps small farmers to compete with bigger supermarkets. If the market were to lose the program, we would lose almost half of our income," said Paul-Zen Lee, a farmer from Davis, CA.

Market Match currently reaches 40% of California's 650 farmers' markets, with many more locations throughout the state interested in offering the program in their communities. Without renewed state funding, the program is projected to run out of funds in early 2027, jeopardizing a decade of progress in food access, public health, and farm viability.

Advocates are seeking \$50M to fund every market in the state that wants to participate, and to increase the match from \$15 to \$20 per market visit. They are also seeking an ongoing allocation such that the program is not reliant on annual legislative budget requests. These state funds can also draw down federal matching dollars through the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program at the USDA.

"Market Match is a win-win-win leveraging state and federal dollars to address food insecurity, health equity, and farm sustainability through local food systems," said Martin Bourque, Executive Director of the Ecology Center that runs the Market Match program. "California can't afford NOT to fund this program; the cost of losing its benefits is simply too high."

California has been a national leader in building a statewide healthy food incentive program—one administered by farmers' market operators, supported by significant state investment, and matched with federal funding. Launched in 2015, Market Match is well past the pilot phase and should be treated as core food system infrastructure.

About Market Match:

[Market Match](#) is California's healthy food incentive program that matches customers' CalFresh nutrition assistance benefits at farmers' markets and other farm-direct sites across the state. The program empowers customers to make healthy food choices and benefits hundreds of small and mid-size California farmers.

Led by the [Ecology Center](#), Market Match is being offered at more than 280 sites in partnership with over 50 community-based organizations and farmers' market operators. Participating sites can be found with the [Farmers' Market Finder](#).

#####