



www.foodbankofsb.org

4554 Hollister Avenue  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
phone 805 967 5741  
fax 805 683 4951

490 West Foster Road  
Santa Maria, CA 93455  
phone 805 937 3422  
fax 805 937 8750

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Attn: County of Santa Barbara, Legislative Program Committee  
105 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

CC: Supervisor Salud Carbajal, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
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The Foodbank of Santa Barbara County urges the Legislative Program Committee of Santa Barbara County to take action in support of AB 1642 (Beall), SB 1359 (Price), and AB 537 (Arambula), all of which can greatly benefit our county. These legislative actions all promote SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly named Food Stamps) enrollment and acceptance.

Santa Barbara County currently ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> of 58 counties for SNAP enrollment in our state. Because of our low enrollment, nearly \$26 million in benefits go unclaimed each year in our county. If more eligible, low-income Californians enrolled in SNAP, benefits of which are provided by the Federal Government, our state would receive \$4 billion more in Federal dollars for food assistance. SNAP is an effective stimulus because recipients use their benefits to obtain supplemental groceries, freeing up other income to purchase taxable necessities like toothpaste, soap, laundry detergent, etc.—the sales tax of which helps state and county general funds.

At the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, we view it as our responsibility to promote good nutrition and assist all struggling families and individuals to access nutritious food; as such, we have hired a SNAP outreach coordinator to help boost enrollment. We are also working with local farmers' markets to encourage SNAP recipients to use their benefits to purchase produce sold by our local farmers.

**AB 1642 (Beall), "SNAP—A Move to Semi-Annual Reporting,"** will significantly reduce the paperwork burden SNAP recipients. California is the ONLY state that requires its SNAP recipients to report their income and other information four times a year in order to maintain their benefits—this onerous requirement makes it very easy for recipients to wrongly be dropped from the program. Instead, AB 1642 will require twice-annual reporting. This legislation is supported by the California Grocers Association, the California Chamber of Commerce and the California Association of Food Banks. We urge Santa Barbara County to also join in support.

**SB 1359 (Price), "SNAP Finger Imaging Elimination & Simplified Reporting,"** will eliminate finger-printing as a requirement for SNAP enrollment. The finger-printing requirement deters many eligible recipients from enrolling in the program. Furthermore more effective measures to reduce fraud in the program have already been enacted by the state; most notably 10 years ago we switched the disbursement of food stamps from paper vouchers to plastic EBT debit cards. The California State Association of Counties has already endorsed SB 1359 and we urge Santa Barbara County to also join in support.



**AB 537 (Arambula), "EBT at our Farmers' Markets,"** will help our county farmers, as well as help improve the nutritional health of SNAP recipients. When the state moved the disbursement of benefits to more efficient plastic EBT debit cards, recipients were largely cut-off from buying produce from local farmers. While the farmers' markets in Santa Barbara are EBT acceptable, the markets in the northern part of the county are not. This legislation helps all farmers' markets access free, wireless EBT machines so that SNAP recipients can once again buy fresh produce directly from our growers. We urge Santa Barbara County to support our farmers and nutritious food by supporting this legislation.

Please join us in support of these legislative items. I have attached information sheets as well as a letter of support from the California Grocers Association. I will follow up with you soon and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thanks very much!



--Gina Fischer

Development Associate

Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

[gfischer@foodbanksbc.org](mailto:gfischer@foodbanksbc.org) / 805-967-5741 x 108

[www.Foodbanksbc.org](http://www.Foodbanksbc.org)

## SNAP—A Move to Semi-Annual Reporting



### About AB 1642

The passage of AB 1642 would significantly reduce the paperwork burden for CalWORKS and SNAP recipients. *This bill would adopt a semi-annual reporting requirement replacing California's current onerous and inefficient three-times-a-year reporting system.* This bill would make government more efficient by reducing red tape, and increase participation in these programs.

### Your support will have a huge positive Impact

*California has the 2nd to lowest SNAP enrollment rate of all 50 states—and Santa Barbara County ranks 32nd out of 58th in California enrollment.* According to a recent LA Times article, "Only 48% of eligible Californians are enrolled...that is well below the national average." Furthermore, because of such low enrollment rates, California misses out on up to another \$4.8 billion in SNAP benefits from the Federal Government. According to Moody's Investor Services, an independent credit rater and financial services researcher, SNAP benefits have the highest economic multiplier effect of all government programs that stimulate the economy. In fact, Federal officials estimate that for every \$5 in benefits spent, as much as \$9.20 in economic activity is generated—a huge stimulus for our economy.

### Key Support

**California Grocers Association**  
**California Chamber of Commerce**  
**California Association of Food Banks**

From the California Grocers Association, "[We] see firsthand how necessary the [SNAP] program is, particularly in these tough economic times for California residents. And this difficult economic climate makes access to food stamps even more necessary."

### Our responsibility

-The Foodbank of Santa Barbara County is forming partnerships at the federal, state and county level to minimize SNAP enrollment barriers like finger-printing, excess verification reporting, in-person application submission and interviews

-We hired a part-time SNAP outreach coordinator, Amy Lopez, who works with our 250 member agencies and programs to help potential recipients navigate the enrollment process. Amy also teaches hands-on cooking and nutrition classes with these individuals



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April 2, 2010

Honorable Jim Beall  
Assemblyman, 24<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
State Capitol, Room 5016  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1642 (Beall) - SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblyman Beall:

On behalf of the California Grocers Association (CGA), I write to express our support for your Assembly Bill (AB) 1642. The measure would align California's income verification requirements for SNAP ("food stamps") recipients to those of 49 other states, requiring such verification semi-annually rather than quarterly.

California's grocers support access to healthy foods for all Californians. During these difficult economic times, many families are struggling to make ends meet in the face of job loss, reduction of work hours, pay reductions, furloughs, etc... Now more than ever, families need access to food assistance that they qualify to receive. If food stamp participation increased just 10%, California could benefit from \$250 Million additional federal dollars into the program. That is a remarkable figure given that Moody's Investor Services estimates each \$1 spent in the food stamps program generates \$1.74 in economic activity!

For these and other reasons, CGA supports your AB 1642. I look forward to working with you toward eventual enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

**KERI ASKEW BAILEY**  
Vice President, Government Relations

cc: Members, Assembly Human Services Committee  
Assembly Republican Caucus  
Mr. Mike Webb, Office of the Governor

## SNAP Finger Imaging Elimination & Simplified Reporting



### **About SB 1359**

The passage of SB 1359 will eliminate finger-printing as a requirement for the SNAP enrollment process. The finger-printing requirement, coupled with three-times-annual reporting serve a major barriers for eligible Californians to enroll for SNAP benefits.

### **Your support will have a huge positive impact on California's economy**

California has the 2nd to lowest SNAP enrollment rate of all 50 states. According to a recent LA Times article, "Only 48% of eligible Californians are enrolled...that is well below the national average." Furthermore, because of such low enrollment rates, California misses out on up to another \$4.8 billion in SNAP benefits from the Federal Government. According to Moody's Investor Services, an independent credit rater and financial services researcher, SNAP benefits have the highest economic multiplier effect of all government programs that stimulate the economy. In fact, Federal officials estimate that for every \$5 in benefits spent, as much as \$9.20 in economic activity is generated—a huge stimulus for our economy.

### **Support**

**California State Association of Counties**

**California Association of Food Banks**



*Foodbank SNAP Coordinator, Amy Lopez, doing SNAP outreach and nutrition education with Foodbank food*

### **Our responsibility**

The Foodbank of Santa Barbara County is forming partnerships at the federal, state and county level to minimize SNAP enrollment barriers like finger-printing, excess verification reporting, in-person application submission and interviews.

*We are committed to serving those in need.* We hired a part-time SNAP outreach coordinator, Amy Lopez, who works with our 250 member agencies and programs to help potential recipients navigate the enrollment process. Amy also teaches hands-on cooking and nutrition classes with these individuals.



# EBT at our Farmers' Markets

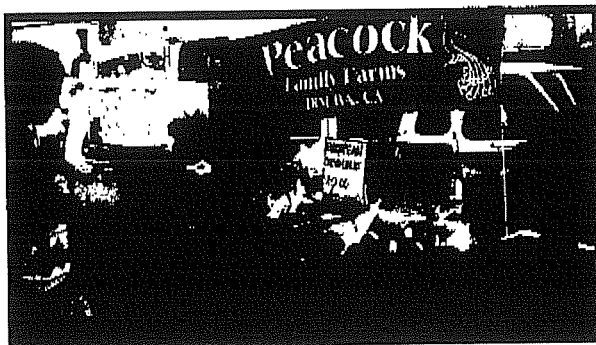


## About AB 537

The passage of AB 537 would enable farmers' markets to operate an EBT system so SNAP recipients can once again buy fresh, local produce directly from farmers at local farmers' markets. AB 537 has passed the Assembly with bi-partisan support and has been sent to the Senate Human Services Committee.

## Supporting farmers & opening access

One of the most effective ways to curb the effects of malnutrition among SNAP recipients is to enable them to use SNAP benefits at local farmers' markets. AB 537 not only positively serves SNAP recipients, but it also supports local farmers.



### From our Farmers' Markets

*Alison from Peacock Family Farms, "Farmers' Markets accepting EBT, it just makes sense for everyone to get their fresh fruits & veggies at their local market. It increases our sales and benefits people of all income levels and diversifies community participation here."*



## Our responsibility

The Foodbank of Santa Barbara County is working with the California Department of Social Services to provide every Countywide farmer's market with EBT POS machines, as well as obtain appropriate market tokens.

We are also working with local farmers' markets to advertise and increase participation of SNAP recipients at our local markets. Increased participation will have a positive impact on revenue for our farmers and will ensure our low-income neighbors have equal access to the healthiest, freshest and most tasty fruits and vegetables proudly grown by our farmers.