

March 16, 2021

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
State Capitol Building, Room 4140
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 778 (Eduardo Garcia) – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Garcia,

On behalf of the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to inform you of our support for your bill, AB 778, which would require all state institutions to purchase California grown produce, when available.

California spends nearly \$300 million annually on food purchasing and California's schools are estimated to spend between \$500 and nearly \$700 million annually on direct food purchases. That is nearly \$1 billion that the state could be directing towards supporting California farmers and their employees by purchasing California grown food.

As you are aware, over the last decade plus our local growers have come under intense pressure from regional and international markets. Fueled by inequities in the labor markets and taking advantage of more relaxed regulatory environments, out-of-market growers have increasingly made it difficult for California's growers to be competitive in the global marketplace. AB 778 represents an opportunity for the State of California to reward our growers that are conducting business equitably, and in a manner prescribed by the State, by purchasing produce from our own local markets.

California's economy benefits when state institutions direct purchasing power towards California grown products and growers reinvest this money back into the economy and their local communities.

For this reason, the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber supports AB 778 and we look forward to working with you to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,



Joshua R. Bonner, IOM
President and CEO
Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce