



City of Riverside, California
Office of the Mayor
PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Steven Glazer
Chair, Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee
1021 O St., Room 1200
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1419 (Rubio) - Food Deserts: Grants - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Glazer,

On behalf of the City of Riverside, I write to express our support of SB 1419 (Rubio) which creates the Food Desert Elimination Act of 2024 and establishes the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program to help grocery store operators provide healthy food options in areas known as "food deserts" or areas at risk of becoming food deserts.

Federal law defines food deserts as both low-income areas and ones in which more than a third of the population lives over a mile from a grocery store/supermarket. According to Northwestern's Institute for Policy Research, one in five Californians are food insecure despite living in the state that produces nearly half of the country's fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, according to 2022 USDA data, 10.5% of California households are in a food desert, yet California does not currently have a financing mechanism to help establish a grocery store in communities with the most need.

SB 1419 would establish a fund and a tax credit for grocery store operators within a designated food desert to help address food insecurity and poverty issues for our most vulnerable or at risk communities. The fund will help eliminate food deserts and increase affordability and access to fresh groceries in underserved areas.

For these reasons, the City of Riverside supports SB 1419. If you have questions regarding the City's position, please contact Chekesha Gilliam, Intergovernmental Relations Officer at (951) 826-2419 or CGilliam@riversideca.gov.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lock Dawson
Mayor, City of Riverside

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee
The Honorable Susan Rubio
City of Riverside Legislative Delegation