

# SB 107 (Alquist) Healthy Food Choices



## The Healthy Food Retail Innovations Fund: A Marketplace Solution to Combating Obesity

### **Background:**

California is struggling beneath the burden of an obesity and overweight epidemic. Over 20% of California adults are overweight; as of 2004, 28.1 of every 100 children in California were overweight. Nutrition and physical activity related diseases are now the second leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States, and California incurs significant cost each year attributable to overweight—estimated at \$21.7 billion in direct and indirect costs.

While individuals make choices about what they eat, these decisions are affected by the availability of food choices in their environment. A recent study released by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy found that California has more than four (4) times as many fast food restaurants and convenience stores than supermarkets and produce vendors. There is increasing evidence that what we eat and the likelihood of being obese are influenced by the foods available in the neighborhoods in which we live. Community food assessments have found that the access to healthy food is not distributed evenly, and residents of low-income communities often have inadequate access to high quality, affordable healthy food.

### **Solution: SB 107 (Alquist)**

California must implement strategies to increase access to healthier food choices like fruits and vegetables in order to reverse the growing obesity epidemic and create healthier communities.

Opportunities for marketplace growth and innovations are particularly strong in areas of the state where produce availability appears to be low, such as in low-income rural and urban areas. Increasing access to retail food markets would both improve the economic vitality and nutritional health of underserved communities.

### **SB 107, The Healthy Food Retail Innovations Fund:**

- **Provides residents of underserved communities with retail food markets that offer high quality fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods.**
- **Encourages retail innovation in underserved areas of the state, which could improve local economic development.**
- **Provides competitive grants for start up costs, including business plan development, feasibility studies, refrigeration units, and outside technical assistance.**

### **Support:**

SB 107 already has broad based support from agriculture, business, environmental and health organizations.

