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Assembly
California Legislature



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August 13, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Robert J. Fenton
Regional Administrator, FEMA Region 9
FEMA, 500 C St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

RE: Support for an Extension and Expansion of the Great Plates Program

Dear Governor Newsom and Mr. Fenton:

We are writing to respectfully request that an extension of the Great Plates Program be continually granted until December 31, 2020, at minimum, and that additional funds be allocated to expand the program. Given the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, the threat to public health remains all too serious. It is imperative that we maintain public safety and take precautions to protect California's high-risk populations.

In April, California launched "Great Plates Delivered," the nation's first program designed to deliver meals to California's high-risk and elderly populations. Since then, the program's success has been felt by over 41,000 seniors, adults at high-risk from COVID-19, and local businesses alike. Comparatively, the restaurant industry has been the hardest-hit by permanent closures due to the pandemic. California alone accounts for 14.4% of the nation's permanent restaurant closures. Given Great Plates' success, it is clear that allocating additional funds to expand this program would greatly benefit its meal recipients and California's economy.

Additional funds, for example, would allow smaller restaurants, which are typically unable to front high food costs, to participate, meaning more meals for more people and more business for more restaurants. The Great Plates Program has demonstrated the positive outcomes that occur when struggling restaurants are provided an opportunity to keep their staff employed and give back to their community. We must continue this program's success by extending the Great Plates Program to, at least, the end of 2020 and direct funds towards program expansion opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (916) 319-2053.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Miguel Santiago'.

MIGUEL SANTIAGO
Assembly Member, 53rd District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Brian Maienschein'.

BRIAN MAIENSCHIN
Assembly Member, 77th District

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MIGUEL SANTIAGO
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-THIRD DISTRICT

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