



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 27 2024

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 1961 without my signature.

This bill would require the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to create the End Hunger in California Master Plan Task Force, composed of 25 members of specified organizations, to create the End Hunger in California Master Plan. The Plan would be made available to the Legislature and the public by January 1, 2027, or two years after an appropriation, whichever is later, and contain recommendations to address hunger and food deserts in California.

Tackling food insecurity is a priority of my Administration. There are currently multiple state programs focused on addressing this issue through the Office of Farm to Fork (Office) within CDFA, including programs that focus on increasing access to healthy foods for underserved communities, such as the California Nutrition Incentive Program. While I support the author's goal to address food insecurity in the state, the expansive scope of the proposed task force would be burdensome for CDFA to implement and would also result in ongoing General Fund costs that should be considered in the annual budget process.

In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety,



housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Gavin Newsom", written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat obscured by the line it crosses.

Gavin Newsom