



Building Communities. Changing Lives.

April 5, 2024

Senator Aisha Wahab
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Marie Alvarado Gil
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for SB 1254 (Becker), the Food for Re-entry and Ensuring Stable Homes (FRESH) Act

Dear Chair Wahab,

On behalf of MidPen Housing, *I write in strong support of SB 1254 by Senator Becker.* This important bill will allow and assist incarcerated people in applying for CalFresh benefits up to 90 days before their release to better prepare them for reentry.

MidPen Housing is one of the nation's leading nonprofit developers, owners, and managers of high-quality, affordable housing and onsite resident services. Since MidPen was founded in 1970, we have developed over 130 communities and 9,400 homes for low-income families, seniors, and those with supportive housing needs throughout Northern California.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—called CalFresh in California—is the largest food assistance program in the nation. However, California has historically had a low ranking on the United State's Department of Agriculture's statewide ranking for eligible households to enroll and participate in food stamps, due in part to barriers to acquiring CalFresh for all applicants.

Under federal law, incarcerated individuals become ineligible to receive CalFresh benefits after 30 days of confinement. While there is already an existing re-entry process for Medi-Cal, there are no equivalent enrollment processes for CalFresh, and various other supportive services.

SB 1254 decreases barriers to re-entry, helps address issues of food insecurity in California, and builds upon existing work in connecting individuals with state services in an effective manner.

For these reasons, MidPen Housing supports SB 1254 and urges your committee to pass this important bill. Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact Nevada V. Merriman, Vice President of Policy & Advocacy, at 650-477-6195 or nmerriman@midpen-housing.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew O. Franklin".

Matthew O. Franklin
President and CEO

CC: Nevada Merriman, Vice President of Policy & Advocacy