



1615 Capitol Ave., Suite 73.771
P.O. Box 997377, MS 7003
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

PHONE: 916.440.7594
FAX: 916.440.7595
<http://www.cclho.org>

Leah Northrop, MPA, MAIS
Executive Administrator
Leah.Northrop@cdph.ca.gov

June 6, 2017

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Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
P.O. Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Re: SB 250 (Hertzberg): School Meals (Support)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board Meeting on June 1, 2017 to take a Support recommendation on SB 250 (Hertzberg), a bill that would require schools to ensure that a pupil whose parent or guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than pupils without unpaid school meal fees. SB 250 would also prohibit school personnel and volunteers at a school required to serve free or reduced-price meals during the school day from taking disciplinary action that directly results in denying or delaying a nutritionally adequate meal to a pupil.

Many children in California suffer from food insecurity and hunger. Inadequate nourishment interferes with their ability to concentrate in school and is a long-term threat to their growth and development as well as their health. CCLHO supports this bill as an important measure to help ensure that all school-aged children have access to nutritious meals during the school day.

SB 250 includes additional requirements that would contribute to food security for many vulnerable families. This bill includes the requirement that local educational agencies identify families with a certain number of unpaid school meal fees and, before collecting the unpaid fees, to exhaust all options and methods to directly certify the pupil for free or reduced-price meals. Schools would also need to reimburse school meal fees or unpaid fees debt accrued when a pupil would have been determined to be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

As you know, CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now the California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, and commissions, as well as officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

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This position of support for SB 250 is consistent with CCLHO's strategic priority of promoting and protecting health and well-being through a focus on targeted outcomes for all people. Sb 250 also aligns with CCLHO's legislative priority of providing advice and scientific expertise on public health matters.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Ken.Cutler@co.nevada.ca.us or at 530-265-7154.

Sincerely and on behalf of the CCLHO membership,

Original signed by Dr. Ken Cutler

Ken Cutler, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers