



SACOG Board of Directors

Item #08-8-17
Action

August 13, 2008

AB 2168 (Jones) – Farm Stands: Direct Marketing: Retail Food

Issue: Should SACOG take a position on AB 2168 (Jones)?

Recommendation: The Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee recommends the Board adopt a support position.

Committee Action/Discussion: Assemblymember Dave Jones has introduced AB 2168, which is intended to ease regulations on farm stands and make it easier for farmers to sell directly to consumers. It includes a number of changes to state law, all of which are targeted at encouraging sales of California-grown fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables, and making it easier for farmers to sell their products locally.

Among other provisions, AB 2168 would authorize the California Department of Food and Agriculture to issue regulations to encourage the direct sale by farmers to the public of all types of California agricultural products. Current law treats farm stand operations similar to retail stores, requiring water and sewer connections that are impractical and cost-prohibitive. This bill would modify definitions in state law to treat farm stands similar to farmers markets, and creates farm stands as a new class of food facility.

Under existing law, farm stands cannot sell bottled water, soft drinks, prepackaged, processed agricultural products (such as dried fruit or pies). AB 2168 would allow farm stands to sell these products, given they are prepared and packaged in an approved facility. Farm stands would only be allowed to prepare food for sampling on-site, and if they do so would be required to provide toilet and hand-washing facilities.

SACOG's Rural Urban Connections Project is looking at economic sustainability of agricultural lands in our region. This legislation increases opportunity for revenue to farmers from agricultural products. The bill is co-sponsored by the California Farm Bureau Federation and the California Federation of Certified Farmers' Markets. California Certified Organic Farmers, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension and several others are listed as supporters of the bill. No opposition on file.

The bill passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 4. It was passed by the Assembly 76-0, and received support from Senators Cox and Steinberg in the Senate Health Committee.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Executive Director

MM:EJ:ts

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