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February 3, 2020

Senators Rolfes and Frockt
Senate Ways and Means Committee, Washington State Legislature
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Senators Rolfes and Frockt,

I am writing on behalf of the statewide [Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition](http://www.copcwa.org) (COPC). We support policy solutions that make healthy choice easier for our children and all WA citizens. COPC respectfully requests the legislature provide \$1.28 million in funding for the Fruit & Vegetable Incentives Program, housed at the state Department of Health.

Families with limited food budgets often struggle with being able to afford healthier foods. The Fruit & Vegetable Incentives Program, which started with federal grant dollars, has demonstrated real positive outcomes related to health, food security and local economic development:

- *The incentives are a win for families*, helping them access the fruits and vegetables they desire and improving health outcomes
 - Children are taught healthy behaviors, helping to establish lifetime habits
- *The incentives are a win for food-insecure people*, adding to their food budget and helping them weather a challenging time
 - Incentives increase access to healthy food and help establish healthier eating habits, even after the incentive program ends
- *The incentives are a win for our state budget* related to health costs
 - Participation in SNAP has already been linked with lower health care costs; fruit and vegetable incentives will only intensify that positive impact (in WA State, 72% of incentive recipients report better managing their health conditions)
- *The incentives are a win for the small farmers and retailers* who sell these foods, strengthening economies across the state

In addition to these many benefits, continued state support of this program positions Washington well for future federal funding opportunities.

This program supports multiple sectors, making it a wise investment of our dollars. We request the legislature provide \$1.28 million in funding for this program that provides a win-win-win for families, farmers, and our state economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Victor Colman, Director
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition

COALITION MEMBERS

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS – WA CHAPTER	SAN JUAN COUNTY HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS – WA CHAPTER	SEA MAR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS
AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY’S CANCER ACTION NETWORK	SEATTLE CHILDREN’S
AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, INC.	SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION	SHAPE WASHINGTON
AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION	SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT
ARCORA	SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT
BEECHER’S FOUNDATION	TACOMA PIERCE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
CASCADE BICYCLE CLUB	TRANSPORTATION CHOICES
CHILDREN’S ALLIANCE	WA ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH
COALITION FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH IN EARLY LEARNING	WASHINGTON BIKES
FEET FIRST	WASHINGTON RECREATION & PARK ASSOCIATION
FORTERRA	WASHINGTON SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION
FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY GENERATIONS	WA STATE ASSN OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS
HEALTHY FOOD AMERICA	WA STATE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS
HEALTHY KING COUNTY COALITION	WASHINGTON STATE DAIRY COUNCIL
KAISER PERMANENTE	WASHINGTON STATE PTA
MULTICARE HEALTH SYSTEMS	WASHINGTON STATE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
NUTRITION FIRST	WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION
ODESSA BROWN CHILDREN’S CLINIC	WITHINREACH
PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON	VIRGINIA MASON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
PUBLIC HEALTH ROUNDTABLE	YMCA – GREATER SEATTLE