

DATE

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

As you know, great strides have been made by the industry since the nationwide outbreak associated with pre-packaged spinach in August and September of 2006. However, I believe more can be done.

Certainly, the industry agrees on one thing – future legislation is not warranted or needed. Regulation will prevent the ability for the industry to be flexible and adapt to whatever scientific research that may come about as we learn how E. coli, Salmonella and other pathogens vector onto fresh produce.

I recommend a more collaborative approach be taken to address the unintended adverse consequences of legislation and rollbacks in conservation measures taken by growers because of unreasonable and unrealistic demands of buyers and retailers. The collaboration should result in the formation of a task force or panel that includes stakeholders from state, federal, and agricultural representatives. It should also include private environmental groups, private industry groups and the scientific community.

The task force or panel should also focus on the overreaching protocols of government agencies that address recall and outbreak situations. Further, the collaborative efforts of the task force or panel should push back on unnecessary legislation and “super metrics” demanded by buyers and retailers.

This group should also review the scientific research being done as well as address the concerns of agricultural and environmental groups alike. It should be narrow in this regard and make recommendations directly to the Leafy Green Marketing Board. In this sense, it will not replace the efforts of the Leafy Green Marketing Agreement, but rather augment it and create more transparency.

In my view, this will enable better facilitation between each of the players with a stake in California's agricultural community, address the rollback in conservation efforts, create "good science" and, as a result, better GAPs for the industry.

The sustainability and viability of agriculture in this state depend on our ability to be proactive, flexible, forward thinking and transparent – creating a "single voice" to lead the charge toward food safety and nationwide consumer confidence in the fresh produce industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Sincerely,

NAME