



March 19, 2019

Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
Assembly Committee on Education
Legislative Office Building,
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 479 (Nazarian) School meals: plant-based food and milk options: California Climate-Friendly Food Program.
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide strongly supports proposed legislation AB 479 (Nazarian) establishing the California Climate-Friendly Food Program to provide incentives for making healthy and low-carbon food and beverages available to public school pupils.

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, vegetarian diets are healthful and nutritionally adequate for all ages and may reduce long-term risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and other chronic diseases. Plant-based diets are more environmentally sustainable than diets rich in animal products because they use fewer natural resources and cause less environmental damage. Many school districts in California would like to offer more plant-based food, but face cost barriers since animal-based foods and cow's milk are heavily subsidized by the federal government relative to plant-based options.

Under AB 479 (Nazarian), schools will receive additional state funding for serving a plant-based entree and plant-based milk and support for staff training, student engagement, recipe development and other technical assistance needed to help public schools boost participation rates and successfully serve plant-based foods.

AB 479 (Nazarian) will help California's public schools reduce their carbon footprint while serving kids healthier food. Pediatricians across the state urge you to vote AYE on AB 479 (Nazarian).

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,

Eileen Rendahl
Associate Director, American Academy of Pediatrics, California
cc: AAP-CA Leadership; Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian