



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
WITH FAMILY FARMERS

March 23, 2016

Assemblymember Marc Levine
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Room 2141
Sacramento, CA 94249-0010

RE: AB 1810 (Levine), the California Seed Exchange Democracy Act—SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Levine:

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a statewide organization that represents both farmers and non-farm urban residents who support sustainable food and farming policies. CAFF is pleased to support your AB 1810, the California Seed Exchange Democracy Act.

Noncommercial seed sharing initiatives, often called seed libraries, offer free, non-proprietary seeds to the public as a way of increasing food literacy through education, encouraging healthy diets, promoting self-sufficiency by teaching seed saving, and preserving seeds as common cultural resources. There are nearly 50 such initiatives in California. It is our understanding that the California Seed Law currently stands in the way of these seed swap initiatives. The seed law requires anyone who “sells” seed to register, test, and label their seeds in accordance with the law, but the definition of “sell” is so broad that it includes even noncommercial sharing of seeds. This was not the intent of the law, nor should it be enforced this way.

AB 1810 amends the definition of “sell” in the Food and Agriculture Code to mean only commercial activity, which would clarify and reflect the true intent of the law and protect noncommercial seed sharing initiatives throughout California. We believe that noncommercial seed sharing is a basic right and should not be infringed by government regulation. Many other states have already made this determination.

We thank you for introducing this legislation and we support its passage.

Sincerely,

David Runsten
Policy Director