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Dear Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the Vouchers 4 Veggies (V4V) program to express my strong support for the Food Security Task Force (FSTF). Eliminating or reducing the effectiveness of this vital public body would create significant gaps and challenges that we simply cannot afford to ignore.

The FSTF has been active since 2005 and has been a fully functioning, efficient, and well attended public commission. The FSTF is a nationally respected public body that benefits the City and County of San Francisco by contributing expertise to elected officials and city departments, creates cross sector collaboration, promotes knowledge sharing, provides transparency, produces annual data and recommendations, and advises on strategies to reduce food security in San Francisco.

If eliminated, the following essential functions would be lost:

- A city body addressing food security – reducing visibility of the issue, removing city transparency and accountability for food security and an eliminating cross-sector coordination.
- A centralized platform to address emerging issues and risks of the community.
- Annual reports including current status of Food Security in SF, opportunities, threats and recommendations and regular updates to the Board of Supervisors and Mayor's Office.

Vouchers 4 Veggies is a San Francisco-based healthy food supplement program proven to increase access to and affordability of healthy foods among the city's most vulnerable communities. V4V has benefited significantly from the work put forth by the FSTF in the following ways.

- V4V utilizes the statistics shared in the annual report to determine priority populations and neighborhoods to target with our program so we are reaching those most in need
- The FSTF annual recommendations inform V4V's strategic planning and program approach
- The FSTF provides V4V with a network to connect with other organizations in San Francisco dedicated to addressing food insecurity which helps to minimize duplication of services, fosters collaboration, and encourages public/private partnerships
- The FSTF provides the only city-wide platform for food security-focused organizations, including ourselves, to quickly gather and mobilize in response to emergencies (ex: COVID-19 response)

The FSTF is the only public body that is dedicated solely to food security and provides a platform for collaboration across food security stakeholders. The FSTF should remain intact until another suitable replacement has been established.

Sincerely,

Melissa Akers
Director, Vouchers 4 Veggies

