



July 7, 2017

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 954 (Chiu): Food labeling: guidelines: quality and safety dates – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Lara,

On behalf of the California Chapters of the Solid Waste Association of North America's (SWANA) Legislative Task Force (LTF), I am pleased to write to you in **SUPPORT** of **AB 954 (Chiu)**, which would help reduce food waste throughout the state.

SWANA is the world's largest association of solid waste professionals (7,700 members). SWANA's California chapters represent more than 900 members. SWANA represents much of the publicly-owned and -operated solid waste management infrastructure in the state and the local governments responsible for implementing waste diversion and recycling programs. The LTF is responsible for representing the California Chapters on legislative and regulatory issues. SWANA is committed to advancing the practice of environmentally- and economically-sound management of municipal solid waste.

AB 954 (Chiu) would create guidelines for food date labels that provide better food freshness and safety descriptions. Food is the single most prevalent item in California's waste stream, with approximately 5.5 million tons of food disposed in landfills every year, resulting in more than 8.3 million tons of greenhouse gases annually. Prematurely discarded food is both a waste of natural resources and a financial burden to consumers and industry.

The lack of standardized date labels largely contributes to consumer confusion and misinterpretation and unnecessary food waste. Consumers find it confusing to decipher ambiguous label language that does not clearly indicate food freshness or safety. **AB 954 (Chiu)** will direct the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the Department of Public Health to promote uniform labeling language to better educate consumers. These terms have already been voluntarily adopted by the industry. This bill will encourage labels that include the date on which the food's quality will begin to deteriorate and the date on which there is a high level of risk associated with consumption of the product.

In light of organic waste reduction targets established by the State, this bill will help support source reduction and contribute to achieving these goals. For these reasons and more, the SWANA LTF is pleased to **SUPPORT AB 954 (Chiu)**. Thank you for your consideration of this important measure.

Sincerely,

Jason Schmelzer
Partner
Shaw / Yoder / Antwih, Inc.

Cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable David Chiu, 17th Assembly District

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATES

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