

November 23, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC, 20201

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC, 20250

Dear Secretaries Burwell and Vilsack,

As mayors of United States cities with a shared interest in promoting food security, nutrition, and public health, we are happy to support the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's (DGAC) evidence-based recommendations for healthy dietary patterns and environmental sustainability in the final 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).

In June 2015, the U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution urging the integration of the DGAC's recommendations in the final DGA. As mayors, we recognize the important role of the DGA in the design and implementation of nutrition and food assistance programs and the resulting impacts of the DGA and these programs on our residents' health and on our cities' economic well-being. In tandem, we are also deeply concerned about the growing prevalence of diet-related diseases, high average consumption of unhealthful foods, and the impact of the current American diet on natural resources vital to Americans' food security.

U.S. cities are at the forefront of the fight against diet-related diseases and food security. Home to the majority of Americans, U.S. cities bear the brunt of escalating costs of treating preventable health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain forms of cancer. We also are acutely aware of the need to maintain an adequate supply of safe and nutritious foods for our residents.

We are already witnessing the economic burden of diet-related problems. For example, in Los Angeles County, the cost of diet-related healthcare and lost productivity is estimated at \$6 billion annually, while 1.5 million residents are food insecure. The strong science behind the DGAC's recommendations will enable us to update nutrition and food assistance programs and improve our abilities to achieve food security both today and in the future. We sincerely hope to be able to implement and incorporate these recommendations upon the DGA's publication.

As the DGAC's report has documented, there are negative environmental impacts of the "standard" American diet that threaten our nation's ability to produce food into the future. Research has shown that food production practices influence resource use and food security and that dietary choices will protect those resources and the nourishment of future generations. Through systematic reviews (following the same processes as past DGACs), the DGAC

recommended various dietary patterns that scientific evidence has shown to be the most health-promoting and likely to ensure food security for all Americans. Notably, the DGAC found that the most health-promoting dietary patterns are also those that have the least environmental impact and are therefore more likely to contribute to food security.

As such, the undersigned mayors support the incorporation of environmental sustainability considerations in the 2015 DGA as they relate to ensuring a safe and nutritious diet for all Americans, now and in the future. We urge the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture to recognize the integral role of food security in Americans' abilities to consume a nutritionally adequate diet, and urge you to continue the work of the DGAC by publishing science-based dietary guidelines that encourage Americans to adopt dietary patterns that are higher in plant-based foods and lower in animal-based foods.

Sincerely,

Greg Stanton, Mayor, Phoenix, AZ
Jonathan Rothschild, Mayor, Tucson, AZ
Libby Schaaf, Mayor, Oakland, CA
Kevin Johnson, Mayor, Sacramento, CA
Anthony Silva, Mayor, Stockton, CA
Michael Hancock, Mayor, Denver CO
Tomas Regalado, Mayor, Miami, FL
David Bieter, Mayor, Boise, ID
Javier M. Gonzales, Mayor, Santa Fe, NM
Charlie Hales, Mayor, Portland, OR
Jeff Williams, Mayor, Arlington, TX
Steve Adler, Mayor, Austin, TX
Betsy Price, Mayor, Fort Worth, TX
Annise Parker, Mayor, Houston, TX
Edward B. Murray, Mayor, Seattle, WA

CC:

Debra Eschmeyer, Executive Director of *Let's Move!* and Senior Policy Advisor for Nutrition Policy, The White House
Kevin Concannon, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, USDA
Don Wright, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, HHS
Andrea Palm, Senior Counselor to the Secretary, HHS
Daniel Christenson, Deputy Chief of Staff, USDA
Angie Tagtow, Executive Director for the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, USDA
Kumar Chandran, Chief of Staff, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, USDA