SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS INDEX SHEET

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Item: 28. APPROVED request for a waiver of the Federal Food Stamp Time Limits for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents; directed the Human Resources Agency Director to report back no later than March 7, 2006 with a recommendation regarding renewal of the waiver for April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007, and approved related actions, as recommended by the Human Resources Agency Director

County of Santa Cruz

HUMAN RESOURCES AGENCY
Cecilia Espinola, Director
1000 Emeline Avenue, **Santa** Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-41**30** or **454-4045** FAX: (831) **454-4642**

February 11,2005

APPROVED AND FILED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DATE: March 8, 2005
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE BOARD
BY Sharon Mitchell DEPUTY

AGENDA: March 8,2005

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz CA 95060

RENEWAL OF WAIVER OF FOOD STAMP BENEFIT TIME LIMITS FOR ABLE BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS

Dear Members of the Board:

On May 4,2004, your Board approved the submission of a request to waive the time limits for food stamp benefits for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved the ABAWD Time Limit Waiver through March 31,2005. In order to continue this waiver, your Board must renew the ABAWD Time Limits Waiver request. The purpose of this letter is to recommend that your Board request renewal of the ABAWD Time Limits Waiver for the period April 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006.

As you may recall, able-bodied adults without dependents who are not exempt from work requirements due to disability or age must be employed for an average of 20 hours per week in order to receive Food Stamps. If they cannot meet this work requirement, then they are limited to three months of food stamp benefits in a three-year period. Federal regulations allow for a waiver of this limit to receiving Food Stamps for ABAWDs in areas designated as Surplus Labor Areas or areas that have average unemployment levels more than 20 percent above the national average. With the time limits waiver, ABAWDs are still subject to the same work requirements as other adults receiving food stamps, but they continue to receive food stamps even if they cannot find a job by the end of three months.

Last year, the USDA approved Santa Cruz County for an ABAWD Time Limit Waiver based on a 24-month unemployment average that was 26% higher than the national average for the same period. This year, based on data from 2002-2003, the average unemployment rate in Santa Cruz County was 9.3%, compared to 5.9% nationally, 36% higher than the national average. According to USDA waiver criteria for average unemployment rate, Santa Cruz County continues to qualify for an ABAWD Time Limits Waiver.

The USDA considers ABAWD Time Limits Waiver requests that State Food Stamp agencies submit based on criteria including the local unemployment rate. If your Board

approves renewal of the ABAWD Time Limits Waiver request, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will submit the request to the USDA for approval.

The Santa Cruz County Food Stamp Program serves an average of 150 ABAWDs each month. Without the ABAWD Time Limits Waiver and absent any exemptions to the work requirements, such as being disabled, these persons must be employed for an average of 20 hours per week, or they will only receive food stamps for three months in a three-year period. Given the local unemployment rate and the seasonal nature of our economy, it is often difficult for these individuals to consistently maintain the required level of employment. The ABAWD Time Limit waiver will allow us to prevent hunger among ABAWDs and continue to provide for the basic needs of low-income adults in our community. The waiver request for Santa Cruz County is supported by the California Food Policy Advocates, the Central Coast Hunger Coalition, and Second Harvest Food Bank.

IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED that your Board take the following actions to renew the ABAWD Time Limit Waiver:

1. Direct the Human Resources Agency Director to submit a request to CDSS to continue the ABAWD Time Limit Waiver until March 31, 2006; and

2. Direct the Human Resources Agency Director to return no later than March 7, 2006 with a recommendation regarding renewal of the waiver for April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007.

Very truly yours,

Cecilia Espinola (SX)

CECILIA ESPINOLA
Director

CE/sg
n:\Board Letters\FY04-05\Benefits\Food Stamps\ Renewal of Waiver of Food Stamp Benefit Time Limits for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents

RECOMMENDED:

SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

cc: County Administrative Officer
Clerk of the Board
Second Harvest Food Bank