



**CECILIA AGUIAR-CURRY**  
Assembly Majority Leader, District 4



## FACT SHEET

### AB 1857 – The Grocery Store Access Act

#### SUMMARY

Restrictive covenants are use restrictions embedded in deeds and land use agreements. When used by businesses, they reduce competition and limit community access to essential resources. Some grocery stores have included terms in property agreements that prevent new grocery stores from occupying the space after their business closes, potentially for decades. This bill would prohibit grocery stores from utilizing these covenants that prevent future grocery store use, thereby reducing food deserts and improving food affordability.

#### BACKGROUND

Nearly three million low-income Californians live in food deserts—areas where residents lack consistent access to affordable, healthy food due to the absence of nearby grocery stores and supermarkets. These conditions disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color, reflecting longstanding racial and economic inequities in access to healthy food. For example, nearly half of Black neighborhoods across the United States have neither a supermarket nor a full-service grocery store.

Restrictive covenants are legal clauses in deeds, leases, and other land use documents that have historically been used to limit access to essential services for certain communities. In the late twentieth century, restrictive covenants in housing deeds enforced neighborhood segregation by preventing property owners from selling homes to people of color. Although redlining and racial covenants have been outlawed at the federal and state levels, other forms of restrictive covenants continue to restrict access to essential services.

When major chain grocery stores close or relocate, they sometimes sell or lease former sites with restrictive covenants that prohibit future grocery store use for up

to 15 to 50 years, further limiting access in communities already facing disinvestment. As a result, low-income neighborhoods and Black, Indigenous, and people of color continue to face structural barriers to food access.

#### PROBLEM

When a grocery store closes and leaves behind a restrictive covenant it prevents a new grocery store from meeting the community's needs for years or decades. This contributes to the creation and persistence of food deserts. Without access to grocery stores, residents are forced to rely on smaller outlets that may stock fewer healthy options at higher prices, contributing to poor nutrition and higher consumer cost. This limited access to affordable and nutritious food is linked to higher rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and premature death, creating lasting public health vulnerability. Restrictive covenants function as structural barriers to food access, locking marginalized communities out of healthy, affordable food.

#### THIS BILL

AB 1857 would prohibit grocery stores from using restrictive covenants that prevent a property from being used as a grocery store in deeds or land use agreements. Existing restrictive covenants meeting these criteria would be rendered void and unenforceable. By removing restrictive provisions in contracts, this bill would help reduce food deserts in California.

#### SUPPORT

California Food & Farming Network (Sponsor)  
Economic Security CA Action (Sponsor)  
Tech Equity Action  
American Economic Liberties Project  
Yolo Food Hub Network  
World Be Well Organization  
Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture



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Sustainable Economies Law Center  
Sierra Harvest  
Shalom Farms  
Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County  
San Diego Food System Alliance  
Sacramento Food Policy Council  
Roots of Change  
Pesticide Action and Agroecology Network  
Nourish California  
Native American Environmental Protection Coalition  
Los Angeles Food Policy Council  
National Right to Food Community of Practice  
Los Angeles Community Action Network  
Institute for Local Self-Reliance  
Health Right 360  
Glid Foundation  
Fullwell  
Fresh Approach  
Foodshed Coop  
Food for People  
Food Empowerment Project  
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano  
Food Access LA  
Farm2People  
End Child Poverty California Powered by Grace  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Ceres Community Project  
CASA Visco  
Californians for Disability Rights Inc  
Asian Pacific Islanders Forward Movement  
Agricultural Institute of Marin  
ACTERRA: Action for a Healthy Planet

#### CONTACT

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