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For Immediate Release
February 23, 2006

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Chiang Says FTB's Free e-file Program Issues Tax Refunds in 5-7 Days

State tax refunds are available to individuals in less than a week—if you file your tax return electronically, announced Board of Equalization Chair and Franchise Tax Board (FTB) Member John Chiang.

Many taxpayers can e-file for free using the FTB's *CalFile* program. *CalFile* is available to taxpayers who file the 540 2EZ, 540A and, to a limited degree, the 540 long form. *CalFile* accepts income of up to \$287,682, itemized deductions, and some tax credits. Some commercial e-file providers also offer free services to select taxpayers.

"The Franchise Tax Board's free e-file program, *CalFile*, is available to 6.4 million of the state's nearly 15 million filers," said Chiang. "Last year, 158,000 taxpayers took advantage of it and we are hoping to significantly increase those numbers this season." To date, *CalFile* returns are down by 30 percent.

The FTB's Website—www.ftb.ca.gov—offers taxpayers everything they need to know about *CalFile* plus everything they need to complete their tax returns online. Besides e-filing, taxpayers can get answers to tax questions, get forms, check on a refund's status, get an email reminder to file, and much more.

"I urge taxpayers to take advantage of *CalFile*," added Chiang. "With every tax return that is e-filed, the state wins too since the Franchise Tax Board saves up to \$1 in processing costs."

The FTB's *CalFile* program can be accessed online at <http://www.ftb.ca.gov/online/calFile/index.html>.

Nearly two-thirds of all taxpayers get refunds. Last year's refund averaged \$765. Since e-filed returns are received and processed immediately by the tax board, refunds are issued quickly. As we get closer to April, taxpayers who file paper returns through the mail can expect to wait 6-8 weeks to get their refunds as the tax board gets backlogged with mail. However, those who use *CalFile* will see their refund within 5-7 days.

The FTB provides an automated toll-free phone line 24 hours a day at (800) 338-0505 in English and Spanish. Taxpayers can get answers to frequently asked tax questions, order tax forms, check on refund status, and more. For taxpayers who have a technical question and need to speak with a customer service representative, the FTB staffs its general toll-free phone line, (800) 852-5711, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., weekdays, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Starting March 27, help will be available on weeknights until 10 p.m.

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