



The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
United States Senate – Kansas
Hart SOB Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
United States Senate – Michigan
Hart SOB, Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives Texas – 11th
RHOB, Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives Minnesota – 7th
RHOB, Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Stabenow, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Peterson:

We are writing in response to yesterday's vote to proceed with a 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee.

As Conferees begin their deliberation, we are writing to urge all members of the Conference Committee to oppose any proposals that reduce aid provided through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which serves as the country's most important anti-hunger program. With 40 million Americans still struggling with hunger, 4 million of whom live in California, we believe that the Conference Committee should consider proposals that increase SNAP assistance to be included in the final Farm Bill Conference report.

The Farm Bill represents the primary federal investment in reducing hunger among our nation's low-income children, working families, seniors, individuals, veterans and people with disabilities. The reauthorization of the 2018 Farm Bill presents an opportunity to reaffirm our nation's bipartisan commitment to ending hunger. The bill only achieves this goal by strengthening, not cutting, our investments in SNAP and other vital anti-hunger programs.

According to the Census Bureau's 2015 Supplemental Poverty Measure, poverty and hunger exist in every corner of every state, including California. Anti-hunger programs like [SNAP help reduce hunger for over four million low-income Californians, including two million children. SNAP recipients live in small towns, cities and rural areas across California](#) and rely on the benefits SNAP provides to put food on the table. [Nationwide, federal nutrition programs provide 19 out of 20](#)

[emergency meals](#), yet because SNAP benefits are inadequate to last the entire month, [nearly one-third of households that receive SNAP still rely on food banks to make ends meet](#).

SNAP also supports California's economic viability, while playing an important role in preventing hunger. SNAP drives over [\\$7 billion in total economic activity annually](#) and every billion in SNAP generates approximately 14,000 jobs, particularly in our state's robust food and farming sectors and helps respond to changing economic conditions and in times of disaster, which are all too common in our state.

In May, over 100 statewide and regional organizations signed onto a [letter](#) addressed to the California Congressional Delegation opposing the House Farm Bill (H.R. 2) which proposes cuts to SNAP that would increase hunger and hardship for California's most vulnerable residents. While our state's anti-hunger community [does not oppose the Senate's bi-partisan approach](#), we were disappointed that, with so much work to be done in alleviating poverty and hunger for millions of low-income Americans and their communities, that it does not propose changes through SNAP to increase the ability of the program to reduce hunger, like ending the shelter cap and increasing the value of SNAP food benefits which currently provide less than \$2.00 per meal per day. Still, we are hopeful that the Conference Committee's final report will embrace the Senate's approach and reauthorize critical food, farming and nutrition programs while safeguarding our most vulnerable communities from hunger.

We are grateful for your service and your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty (jbartholow@wclp.org)

Andrew Cheyne, California Association of Food Banks (andrew@cafoodbanks.org)

Rachel Tucker, California Association of Food Banks (rachel@cafoodbanks.org)

Jared Call, California Food Policy Advocates (jared@cfpa.net)

cc:

Honorable Kevin McCarthy, U.S. House of Representatives, Majority Leader

Honorable Nancy Pelosi, U.S. House of Representatives, Minority Leader

Honorable Jim Costa, U.S. House of Representatives, 2018 Farm Bill Conferee

Honorable Maxine Waters, U.S. House of Representatives, 2018 Farm Bill Conferee

Honorable Ed Royce, U.S. House of Representatives, 2018 Farm Bill Conferee

Honorable Jeff Denham, U.S. House of Representatives, 2018 Farm Bill Conferee

Honorable Doug LaMalfa, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Agriculture

Honorable Jimmy Panetta, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Agriculture

Honorable Barbara Lee, U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate

Honorable Kamala Harris, U.S. Senate

Will Lightborne, Director, California Department of Social Services

Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director, California Welfare Directors Association