February 28, 2022

Dear Chairs Baldwin and Bishop and Ranking Members Hoeven and Harris:

We write to respectfully request that you include additional funding beyond what has already been provided in FY2022 appropriations legislation for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in omnibus spending legislation or any additional COVID relief supplemental spending legislation.

The charitable food system continues to experience an on-average 40 percent increase in demand for local emergency hunger relief, with over 60 million people turning to food banks in 2020\(^1\). This rise comes at a time when past emergency food support provided by Congress has ended. As we continue to observe a high demand for food assistance, food banks will need additional support to ensure they can meet the demand from community members, families, and children facing hunger.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) foods including TEFAP are the cornerstone of the food supply for our nation’s food banks. According to Feeding America, USDA commodities provide approximately 39 percent of the food distributed by their network of 200 food banks and 60,000 local faith-based and charitable partner organizations. Last year, USDA foods provided 2.4 billion meals distributed to their network food banks. Many food banks could struggle to meet the demand for food assistance without the fresh fruits, vegetables, protein, and more provided through the program.

\(^1\) State-By-State Resource: The Coming Food Bank Crisis - Your Community May Face a Food Crisis in 2021 - Feeding America Action
Further, TEFAP is essential to rural communities. Rural communities make up 63 percent of all counties in the United States, but account for 87 percent of counties with the highest rates of food insecurity in the nation\(^2\). Last year, through USDA commodities, food banks distributed 1.2 billion pounds of food to rural America\(^3\), with TEFAP providing nearly 40 percent of this assistance. For years, farmers, agriculture partners, and food banks have maintained a deep working relationship to provide U.S. grown commodities to families and children facing hunger.

We can help address the need for emergency food bank support by providing an additional $900 million for food purchases through TEFAP. We ask that you include this additional critical funding to ensure food insecure families can put food on the table.

Sincerely,

[Signatures of Members of Congress]

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\(^2\) Rural Hunger Facts | Feeding America
\(^3\) The Emergency Food Assistance Program is Rural America's Hunger Lifeline - Feeding America Action
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress
Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

Daniel Meuser  
Member of Congress

Kaiali'i Kahele  
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress
Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Elaine G. Luria  
Member of Congress

Troy Carter  
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress