

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2025

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

We write today regarding the historic reforms to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) included in the budget reconciliation package (H.R. 1) signed into law on July 4, 2025.

As you know, SNAP is a federally funded, state-administered program designed to help eligible low-income households buy groceries with taxpayer-backed benefits. When run as Congress intended, it offers an essential safety net for families in need, helping them achieve nutritional security, move toward financial stability, and ultimately pursue greater independence and the American dream. Upholding program accountability and ensuring accurate administration are essential to making certain SNAP reaches those truly in need, which is the focus of the reforms included in H.R. 1.

Regrettably, decisions made by your administration have weakened the program, producing outcomes that disadvantage both Minnesota families and federal taxpayers.

For example, in May 2024 Minnesota reported more than 170,000 job openings even as unemployment stood at only 3.3 percent, well below the national average of 4.2 percent. Yet your administration requested broad work requirement exemptions for able-bodied adults without dependents across 15 counties and ten reservation areas. By combining areas with stronger job markets into the waiver requests, the state made it easier to secure approval from the Biden Administration. These actions effectively denied thousands of Minnesotans the chance to gain work experience, receive training, or contribute through volunteer programs – the very opportunities SNAP was meant to support.

Minnesota has also chosen to implement an optional state SNAP policy called Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility and eliminate asset tests as a condition of enrollment. This policy allows households to qualify for benefits without reporting savings, investments, secondary properties, or recreational assets. Each of these actions by the state has led to individuals who were not

intended to receive SNAP benefiting from the program – maximizing dependency rather than ensuring the program is assisting the most vulnerable.

In 2024 alone, the state issued nearly \$77 million in SNAP benefits improperly, including both overpayments and underpayments. When these errors occur, the state is legally required to recoup the costs and families face the burden of repayment long after the funds have been spent, through no fault of their own. Minnesota's payment error rate remains well above its levels from a decade ago, with little evidence of meaningful corrective action.

We share the objective of helping Minnesotans in need, but federal SNAP spending has grown dramatically, reaching more than \$100 billion in 2024 from \$60 billion in 2019, an increase of almost 70 percent. Without corrective measures, program costs will continue to escalate unsustainably. The reforms in H.R. 1 are essential to restoring balance and ensuring SNAP can continue serving its intended purpose.

Under H.R. 1, your administration will now be required to:

- Provide work, training, or volunteer opportunities for able-bodied SNAP participants, including through the SNAP Employment and Training program, so recipients can gain skills and move toward self-reliance.
- Bring administrative expenses under control, as federal funding will no longer automatically cover unchecked state spending.
- Reduce Minnesota's SNAP payment error rate below six percent or contribute to a portion of benefit costs. The current error rate of 8.98 percent is high compared with neighboring states, although Minnesota previously maintained rates below six percent from 2011 to 2017. The legislation allows an ample transition period to support successful implementation of these reforms.

Finally, we are deeply concerned by your administration's unwillingness to ensure counties have the resources they need to reduce SNAP error rates. As you know, Minnesota is one of only nine states that forces counties to cover administrative costs. Moreover, work requirement waivers and expanding SNAP via BBCE are decisions made by the state, yet you are forcing counties to foot the bill for the state's culture of dependency. It is disappointing that in recent years, the State of Minnesota squandered a \$20 billion surplus on reckless spending rather than supporting the needs of Minnesotans living outside the metro area.

We hope you will reconsider your priorities rather than resorting to fearmongering in your communications with local officials. Meeting the six percent error rate threshold will entirely exempt Minnesota from contributing to SNAP benefit costs and provide a strong incentive to improve program management.

If your administration cannot make improvements that Minnesota has previously demonstrated are possible, it will be clear that budget priorities, not capacity, are at fault. Congress will not overlook continued mismanagement of taxpayer resources at the expense of families in need. The path forward is yours to choose: either defend the status quo or take the steps necessary to restore integrity to Minnesota's SNAP program.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. SNAP is a critical program with the ability to support families toward lasting independence, and we stand ready to work with your administration to ensure Minnesota fully implements the intent of H.R. 1.

Sincerely,



Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress