Minnesota Senate

Minnesota House of Representatives

October 24, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Brooke Rollins, Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear President Trump and Secretary Rollins:

We understand that earlier this month, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided notice to the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and other Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Directors that if the federal government shutdown continued, there would be insufficient funds to pay November SNAP benefits, and possibly Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits. **A delay of benefits would devastate over 440,000 Minnesotans, and more than 42 million people across the country.**

We are writing to strongly encourage your Administration to choose to keep American families fed. The Administration can use its ability to release contingency funds, and transfer nutrition funds, to ensure November SNAP payments are not interrupted for the 42 million low-income Americans who rely on the program- including about 16 million children, 8 million seniors, and 4 million people with disabilities.

We contend that legally, individuals and families who meet SNAP's eligibility requirements are entitled to benefits. And some legal experts have even argued that SNAP may have a permanent appropriation under the Food and Nutrition Act, which would fund the program during lapses in appropriations.

But even if the Administration does not agree that SNAP has permanent appropriations, **USDA has at least $5 billion in contingency funds that the Administration can, and should release to provide even partial benefits to eligible households for November.**

- According to USDA's own lapse of funding plan, "Congressional intent is evident that SNAP's operations should continue [during a shutdown] since **the program has been provided with multi-year contingency**

funds." **40 staffers** were "excepted from furlough to support program operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, program policy and operations, financial management, and stakeholder communications."

- The SNAP contingency fund was provided $3 billion each year in FY24 and FY25 appropriations bills.
- ***USDA is already using some of these contingency funds*** to reimburse states for the federal share of their administrative expenses (50 percent in fiscal year 2026) ***during the shutdown;*** there are estimates that ***at least $5 billion remain unused in reserves.***

This remaining **$5 billion in SNAP contingency funds would provide nearly two-thirds of the $8 billion that would be needed for a full month of benefits** in November; **we strongly encourage you to use these funds when regular funding for SNAP runs short.**

The Administration should also use its legal authority to transfer funds among nutrition programs to supplement these SNAP contingency funds, in order to fully fund November benefits for American families.

- The USDA Secretary has discretion under the law (7 U.S.C. § 2257) to transfer funds among USDA's nutrition programs, with certain limitations.
- USDA has already used this discretionary authority to transfer $300 million to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program earlier this month, from the Child Nutrition (CN) budget account to prevent disruptions to WIC benefits.
- Child Nutrition programs are largely funded by customs fees of the previous fiscal year; based on OMB records, **it's estimated that there is more than $23 billion available in the CN budget should these funds be needed for transfers.**

The Administration can choose to keep American families fed during this shutdown - like it did in 2019. **USDA has available at least $5 billion in SNAP contingency funds,** and **billions more that it could transfer from CN** to ensure November SNAP payments are not interrupted. **We strongly encourage you to release these funds immediately so that SNAP directors can send benefit issuance files to vendors for November.**

Sincerely,

/s/
Erin Murphy
Minnesota Senate Majority Leader

/s/
Zack Stephenson
Minnesota House DFL Leader

/s/
Jamie Long
Minnesota House Floor Leader

/s/
Liz Lee
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Melissa H. Wiklund
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Liz Boldon
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Scott Dibble
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Omar Fateh
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Heather Gustafson
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Grant Hauschild
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Foung Hawj
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Ann Johnson Stewart
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
John Marty
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Erin Maye Quade
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Jennifer McEwen
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Clare Oumou Verbeten
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Lindsey Port
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Bonnie Westlin
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Tou Xiong
Minnesota State Senator

/s/
Patty Acomb
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Kristin Bahner
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Kaela Berg
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Mary Frances Clardy
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Nathan Coulter
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Brion Curran
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Alex Falconer
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Sandra Feist
Minnesota House Representative

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Leigh Finke
Minnesota House Representative

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Peter Fischer
Minnesota House Representative

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Cedrick Frazier
Minnesota House Representative

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Mike Freiberg
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Aisha Gomez
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David Gottfried
Minnesota House Representative

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Julie Greene
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Emma Greenman
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Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger
Minnesota House Representative

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Kaohly Her
Minnesota House Representative

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Athena Hollins
Minnesota House Representative

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Michael Howard
Minnesota House Representative

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John Huot
Minnesota House Representative

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Samakab Hussein
Minnesota House Representative

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Pete Johnson
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/s/
Katie Jones
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Sydney Jordan
Minnesota House Representative

/s/
Erin Koegel
Minnesota House Representative

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Liish Kozlowski
Minnesota House Representative

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Larry Kraft
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Xp Lee
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Anquam Mahamoud
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Cheryl Youakim
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