

February 5, 2018

Senator Richard Burr  
217 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr,

The undersigned organizations across North Carolina are writing to ask you to reject any proposals in the 2018 Farm Bill that cut funding to SNAP or other federal nutrition programs; shift costs to the states; or otherwise reduce benefits affecting low-income families, children, workers, the unemployed, or the elderly.

**North Carolina is the 10th hungriest state in the nation.**<sup>1</sup> While average monthly SNAP benefits are nominal — about \$119 per household in North Carolina — the program is vital to helping people access nutritious food. Even with more than 1.5 million North Carolinians (15% of the state’s population) relying on SNAP to pay for their groceries,<sup>2</sup> food insecurity still persists across the state. With 1 in 6 people facing the double burden of poverty and food insecurity, SNAP provides a critical safety net for those in need.

**SNAP helps the most vulnerable in our state.** In North Carolina, SNAP benefits predominantly go to households with children, seniors, or people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup> About half of SNAP recipients are in working families, yet still struggle to make ends meet.<sup>4</sup> SNAP needs to remain means-tested, and must continue to allow all those who need food benefits to access them.

**SNAP participation contributes to improved nutrition and positive long-term health outcomes.** SNAP participation for six months can increase food security in a household by up to 10%.<sup>5</sup> In addition, individuals who had access to food stamps in early childhood have a lower risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes as adults.<sup>6</sup> In addition, access to SNAP is associated with increased utilization of preventive care, which can contribute to lower healthcare costs overall.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, a study at the national level found that SNAP participation was associated with a \$1400 reduction per household in yearly healthcare expenditures.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> USDA’s 2016 Report on Food Insecurity, 3-year average (2014-20156).

<sup>2</sup> CBPP, North Carolina SNAP fact sheet. 2017.

<sup>3</sup> CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2015.

<sup>4</sup> CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2015.

<sup>5</sup> USDA, Food & Nutrition Service. Measuring the Effect of SNAP participation on food security, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Northwestern Institute for Policy Research. Jan 2017.

<sup>7</sup> University of California at Berkeley. The Real Value of SNAP benefits and Health Outcomes.

<sup>8</sup> Berkowitz, S. A. et al. SNAP Participation and Health Care Expenditures Among Low-Income Adults. JAMA Internal Medicine, 2017.

**SNAP improves the state's economy.** SNAP benefits pumped \$2.2 billion into North Carolina's economy in 2016,<sup>9</sup> and the economic benefits were especially impactful in the agriculture and retail sectors. Research from Moody's Analytics shows that for every dollar spent on SNAP, \$1.70 is put back into the U.S. economy.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, SNAP kept 346,000 North Carolinians out of poverty, including 158,000 children, each year between 2010 and 2014.<sup>11</sup> SNAP dollars go to supporting grocers, farmers, paying workers, and buying goods, all of which leads to economic growth. In 2012, SNAP redemptions at farmers markets in NC totaled \$107,971, by 2017 that amount had more than tripled to \$328,215. SNAP allows all families to participate in their local economies and makes our communities stronger.

**SNAP is effective and efficient.** SNAP's entitlement structure allows the program to expand in times of greater need, such as the 2008 recession, and contract in times of economic prosperity. Furthermore, every penny of monthly SNAP benefits for North Carolinians comes from the federal government, and the state of North Carolina is only responsible for half of the administrative costs of the program.<sup>12</sup> The SNAP program therefore brings in billions of dollars of economic activity for North Carolina, with little input at the state level. SNAP also has one of the most rigorous quality control systems of any public benefit program, which results in low frequency of fraud or abuse, and an error rate of just 2%.<sup>13</sup>

To conclude, **we ask you to reject any proposals in the 2018 Farm Bill that cut funding to SNAP or other federal nutrition programs; shift costs to the states; or otherwise reduce benefits affecting low-income families, workers, children, the unemployed, or the elderly.**

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Please let us know that we can count on your commitment to protect these programs. Please contact Sam Hoeffler of the Durham Farm and Food Network at hoefflers@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

Alamance Food Collaborative  
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture  
Program  
ARC of Buncombe County  
Arts for Life  
Asheville Buncombe Community  
Christian Ministries

Asheville Habitat for Humanity  
Asheville Poverty Initiative  
Asheville-Buncombe Food Policy Council  
Atherton Market  
Aura Home Women's Vets  
Benevolence Farm  
Big Brothers Big Sisters

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<sup>9</sup> CBPP, North Carolina SNAP fact sheet. 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, NC Food and Nutrition Services, March 2017

<sup>11</sup> Note: Calculations use Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM).

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and SPM public use files. Corrections for underreported government assistance from Health and Human Services/Urban Institute Transfer Income Model (TRIM).

<sup>12</sup> CBPP, Policy Basics: Introduction to SNAP, Oct. 2017.

<sup>13</sup> USDA, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Payment for Error Rates FY 2014.

Bigger Tables Culinary and Service Consulting  
Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture  
Boone United Methodist Church  
Bountiful Cities  
Bounty and Soul  
Buncombe County Department of Social Services  
Buncombe County Schools  
Cape Fear Community College  
Cape Fear Food Council  
Cape Fear Food Council  
Capital Area Food Network  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
Carolina Farm Trust  
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh  
Carrboro Farmers' Market  
Centripetal Farms  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Food Policy Council  
Children First/ CIS  
Communities in Schools of Thomasville  
Community Action Opportunities  
Community Food Lab  
Conetoe Family Life Center/Missionary Baptist Missionary Baptist Church  
Cooper Riis  
Cornerstone, Beaufort County Healthy Clergy, Congregations and Communities  
Croatian Institute  
Davidson County Local Food Network  
Davidson Farmers Market  
Dr. Barby's Fashions  
Durham Center for Senior Life  
Durham Congregations in Action  
Durham Farm and Food Network  
Durham Farmers' Market  
Durham Lions Club  
End Hunger Durham  
End Poverty Durham  
Eno River Farmers Market  
Farmer Foodshare  
Feast Down East  
Feed My Sheep of Durham North Carolina  
Feeding the Carolinas

First Presbyterian Church Boone  
Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC  
Food Physics & Body Dynamics  
Forsyth Food Consortium  
Friendship Trays  
Girls On The Run  
Green Opportunities  
Healthy Alamance  
Helping Hands Clinic, Inc.  
Helpmate  
Holly Street Neighborhood  
Homeward Bound  
Hope Chest for Women  
Hunger and Health Coalition  
Impact Alamance  
IMR Research Group, Inc.  
Inter-Faith Council for Social Service  
Inter-Faith Food Shuttle  
Irregardless Cafe  
Junior League of Wilmington, NC  
Just Economics  
Just Foods Collaborative of Nash/Edgecombe Counties  
Knew Era Consulting  
Land of the Sky United Church of Christ  
Legal Shield (Individual Associate)  
Little Free Pantry of Boone  
Loaves & Fishes, Inc.  
Meals on Wheels of Durham  
Mediation Center  
MedNorth Health Center  
Men and Women United for Youth & Families, CDC  
Mission Hospital  
MomsRising  
My Brothers Keeper  
North Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
NourishNC  
OIC, Inc.  
Open Doors Asheville  
Orange County Food Council  
Orange County-Organizing Against Racism  
Raleigh Food Corridor

Paisley Alumni Association  
Piedmont Culinary Guild  
PORCH  
PORCH - Hillsborough  
Power Up  
Prace & Reconciliation Mission Group of  
Watts Street Baptist Church  
Primary Health  
Queen City Stay At Home Moms  
Quiet Givers  
Reinvestment Partners  
Reverence Farms and Reverence Farms  
Cafe  
Roots in the Community Market  
Foundation  
Salvation Army  
Senior PharmAssist  
Simone Green Atkins Community  
Development Corporation  
Social Action Committee of Beth El  
Synagogue  
Solution Generators Network  
Student Action with Farmworkers  
Support The Port Foundation, Inc.  
TABLE, Inc.

The Produce Box  
Town of Carrboro  
Town of Chapel Hill  
Town of Hillsborough  
UJIMA CDC  
United Way of Asheville  
United Way of the Cape Fear Area  
Upper Coastal Plain Council of  
Governments  
Verner Center for Early Learning  
Veterans Treatment Court  
Volunteers for Youth  
Watauga Food Council  
West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition  
Western Carolina Medical Society  
Well-Fed Community Garden  
Wilmington Green  
Wilmington West Rotary  
WNC Aids Project  
Youth Ambassadors for a Better  
Community  
Youth Empowered Solutions  
YWCA Asheville  
Zoe Behavior