

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 12, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

This week, alarming media reports have suggested that thousands of low-income people stand to lose access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits at farmers markets across the country. We write to express our concern with the progress that is being made by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to remedy the current situation.

Currently, SNAP recipients can redeem their benefits at more than 7,000 farmers markets across the United States. In recent years, SNAP recipients have increasingly relied on these markets for vital access to local fresh fruits and vegetables.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service was recently notified that a company currently providing a SNAP transaction platform plans to shut down. At present, many details surrounding this situation remain unclear; however, we would like to stress the importance of identifying a timely solution to this impending problem.

The partnership between SNAP and area farmers markets is also critically important to farmers and ranchers in America's rural economy. Today, SNAP recipients annually purchase more than \$18 million worth of products at farmers markets and from direct-marketing farmers, representing a significant share of farm income from coast-to-coast.

Any loss of access to SNAP benefits at farmers markets would result in increased hunger and food insecurity for low-income people and decreased revenues for America's small farmers and ranchers.

There is ample urgency with resolving this issue by the end of this month. As such, we respectfully ask that you provide us with an update of your progress by July 20, 2018. Thank you for your attention on this important matter.

Sincerely,


ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress


SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.
Member of Congress