

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop Jr.
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
1001 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

We write to express our strong support for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and to ask that, as you consider the Fiscal Year 2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, you retain the \$18.5 million funding level from Fiscal Year 2019. WIC FMNP is a critical program that encourages healthy eating in low income families while helping to improve the prosperity of independent, American farmers. Each year the program brings together 1.7 million WIC recipients with over 17,000 farmers.

When the WIC FMNP program was created in 1992, it was the first Federal program of its kind, with the intent of making fresh fruits and vegetables available to low income shoppers. Today, the need for the program remains as research shows that all Americans, particularly those with low incomes, need more fruits and vegetables in their diets. In FY 2016, the program provided an estimated 67 million servings of fresh, locally produced fruits and vegetables to low income pregnant women and children that to which they may not have otherwise had access. For recipients, WIC FMNP establishes healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.


In addition to the nutritional benefits for recipients, the WIC FMNP program also provides increased economic value to local farmers. In FY 2016, the Program resulted in \$17 million in additional revenue to America's hard-working farmers. In many cases, the program is a difference maker for farmers and farmers markets. For example, in 2018 farmers at the 51 Greenmarkets operated by GrowNYC in New York City redeemed \$2.56 million in FMNP checks. Thirteen of the 51 markets are so heavily reliant on the income farmers make from WIC FMNP that they would be forced to close without the program. In Washington state, farmers report that without WIC FMNP, 300 jobs would be lost.

Beyond the direct impacts on farmers and recipients, the WIC FMNP program also has a sizable impact on rural agricultural economies, stimulating economic activity and creating jobs, as well as fighting food deserts and supporting underserved communities. Government spending on food assistance programs stimulates additional fiscal activity better than any other form of spending. When that food assistance is spent directly on independent family farms, the economic impact is further multiplied as that money flows through the regional agricultural economy.

For these reasons, we reiterate our strong support for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program and urge members of the House Appropriations Committee to continue robustly funding the program at levels consistent with recent years.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

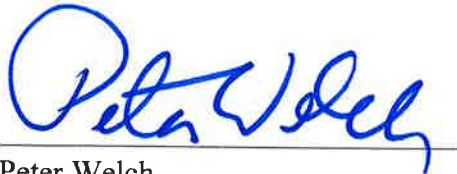
Sincerely,



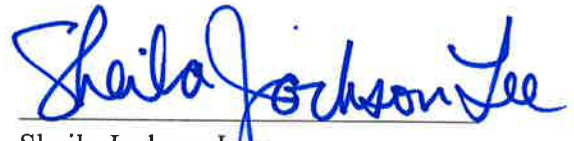
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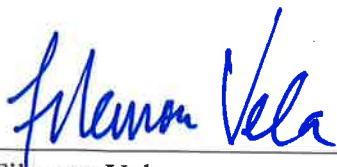
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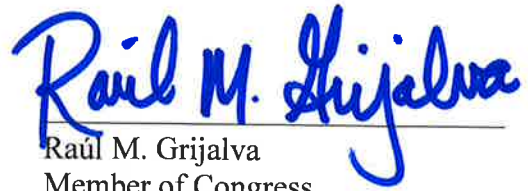
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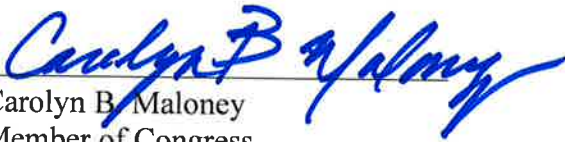
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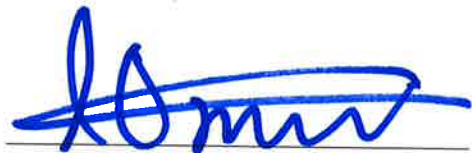
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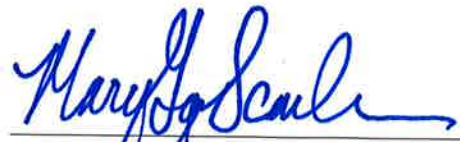
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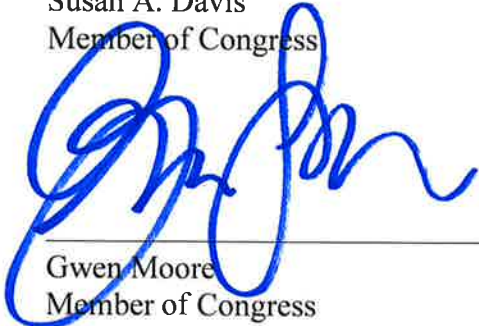
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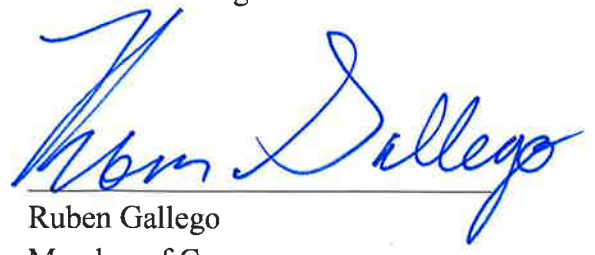
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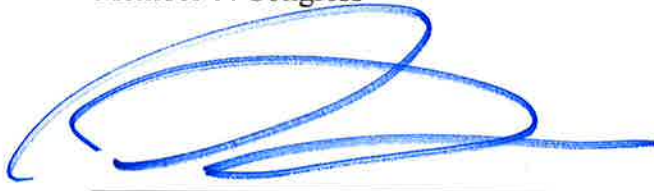

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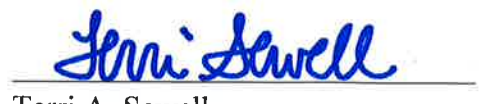

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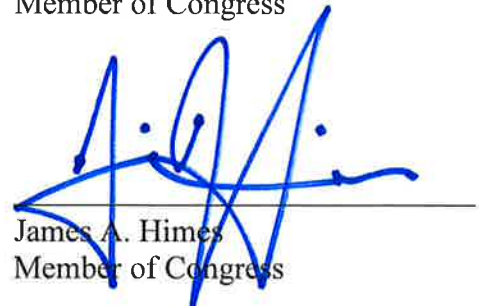

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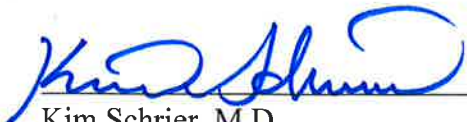

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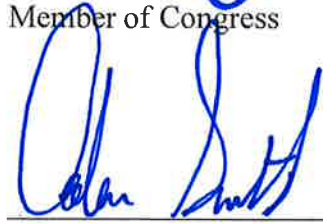

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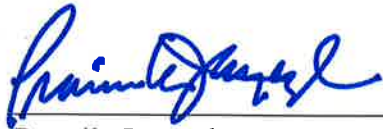

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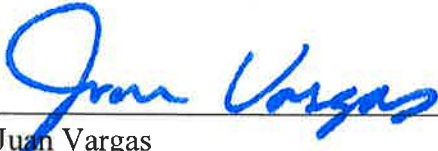
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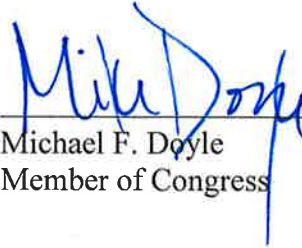
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