



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Senate Stimulus Bill Extends \$9.5 Billion Lifeline to Local Food Economy**

*Farmers Market Coalition urges swift movement in the House to keep national farm and food system strong*

Washington, D.C., March 25, 2020 – After an all-night negotiation, the Senate today passed a two trillion-dollar stimulus package; the third COVID-19 stimulus package to date. The bill includes \$9.5 billion to support “agricultural producers impacted by coronavirus, including producers of specialty crops, producers that supply local food systems, including farmers markets, restaurants, and schools, and livestock producers, including dairy producers.” In response to the Senate’s publication of their third stimulus bill, the Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) issued the following statement:

“We are grateful that the Senate put in the overtime work to get this bill out the door,” said FMC Executive Director Ben Feldman. “Farmers markets and direct market farmers and ranchers across the country have been in a state of limbo for weeks now this package gives them a path forward. While there is more yet to do, we want to thank in particular Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-VT) for their tireless advocacy and support of the local/regional food economy.

We urge the House to take the Senate’s lead and move swiftly to pass this next stimulus package. We also urge both chambers to direct the CDC to clarify that farmers markets are essential services, and to direct the USDA to provide flexibility on deadlines and matching requirements for current grant opportunities. At this time, Congress should be doing everything they can to make sure these essential food and farm businesses can stay in operation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.”

FMC will continue to work with our market members and our champions in Congress to ensure that farmers markets and direct market farmers receive the support they need to stay in business and keep feeding their communities. We will be following this legislation closely as it moves through Congress and monitoring the implementation of any funds issued to ensure they support the local markets and family farm businesses that need them most.

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About Farmers Market Coalition:

The Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit that is dedicated to strengthening farmers markets across the United States so that they can serve as community assets and provide real income opportunities for farmers. FMC provides support and resources to farmers market operators, organizations, state associations, building and maintaining a national network of leaders around local food systems and farmers markets. Learn more at [farmersmarketcoalition.org](http://farmersmarketcoalition.org).