

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

May 5, 2022

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Hoeven,

We respectfully request that the Committee support the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) in the Fiscal Year 2023 Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. We strongly urge the committee to provide expanded funding at a total of \$35 million for the WIC FMNP in FY23.

The WIC FMNP provides vouchers that can be used by WIC eligible parents to purchase nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers markets and farm stands. FMNP is a cornerstone of local food systems, has reduced food deserts, and has added economic stability for small family farmers for over 20 years. FMNP benefits have been redeemed in nearly 2,800 markets and 3,000 farm stands in 49 states, territories, and tribes, with nearly 17,000 farmers participating in the program.

Demand for FMNP benefits remain high as WIC serves approximately 6.9 million low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants, and young children each month. Current funding limits prevent additional States from participating and increased funding is necessary to expand the program to those states. Without funding for the FMNP, thousands of families would lose access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and many small farmers would lose the opportunity to provide their produce to the women, infants, and children who need it most. While the FMNP is important to introducing new families to farmers' markets and provides them with the tools to make healthy food purchases, the program also helps to facilitate a relationship with farmers who benefit from the augmented purchasing power of low-income families. The increased sales earned by local farmers has a multiplier effect as farmers in turn spend these dollars in their local, often rural, communities.

In addition to the benefits to agricultural communities, studies demonstrate that when people have access to affordable healthy foods, like fresh fruits and vegetables, their diets improve significantly, which leads to lower rates of obesity and improved health outcomes. Obesity-

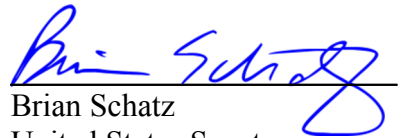
related healthcare costs our nation between \$147 and \$210 billion annually. The FMNP is a reasonable, targeted, and responsible approach to promote the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

We strongly urge the Committee to fully fund the WIC FMNP in the FY23 Agriculture Appropriations bill so that we can continue to ensure access to fresh fruits and vegetables for vulnerable low-income women, infants, and children. Thank you for consideration of this request.

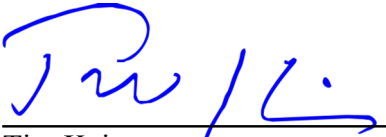
Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



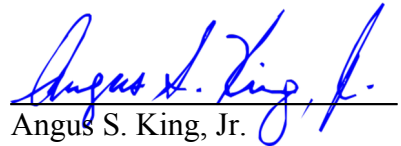
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



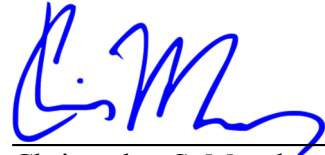
Jack Reed
United States Senator



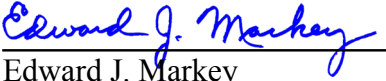
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



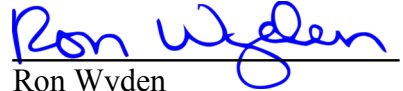
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



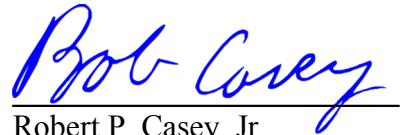
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



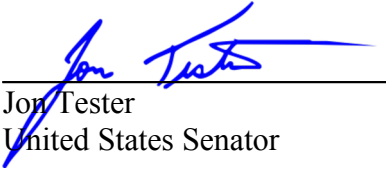
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



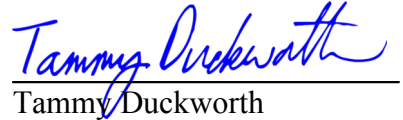
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



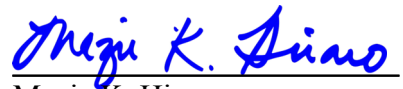
Jon Tester
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



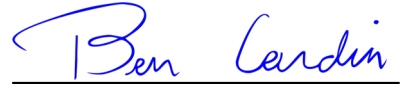
Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



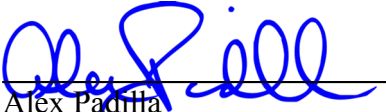
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



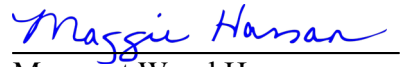
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



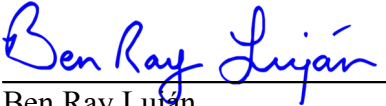
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



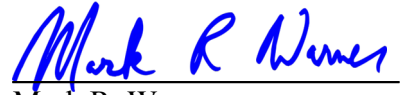
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator




Robert Menendez
United States Senator



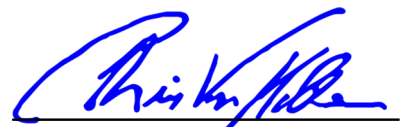
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



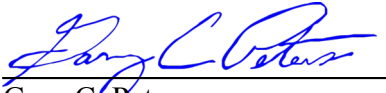
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator