



May 28, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

The Sustainable Food Policy Alliance (SFPA), including Danone North America, Mars Incorporated, Nestlé USA and Unilever United States, writes to urge your support for feeding assistance programs, such as temporarily increasing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in the next coronavirus relief legislation, along with other measures that would boost nutrition-related resources available through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and school meals programs. These federal nutrition programs act not only as a first defense against food insecurity but also help stimulate local economies.

As an organization formed to tackle, among other things, pressing nutrition issues, SFPA focuses on driving public policy actions that advance nutrition science, prevent and lower chronic disease rates and promote good health across all life stages and socio-economic statuses.

We are adding our voice to calls by the nation's leading hunger and feeding policy and relief organizations to make increased benefits and resources available through SNAP, WIC and school meals programs during this crisis. As major food companies, we acknowledge that many of the products we sell are eligible for these programs. At the same time, we recognize that there is a growing hunger and food insecurity crisis in this country. For many Americans, the return to normalcy – a typical workday and a regular, full-time paycheck – will be a long and bumpy road. Millions of children and families are newly at risk for hunger and food insecurity.

In a situation of this magnitude, we cannot stay silent. Congress must take action now to forestall some of the worst economic and public health impacts of the pandemic by ensuring Americans have the resources to feed themselves and their families.

So far, our member companies have donated the equivalent of nearly \$50 million to relief efforts in the U.S. and will continue to work with feeding organizations to donate products and other resources as the crisis continues<sup>1</sup>. We are so pleased that many other companies and individuals across the country have done and will continue to do the same.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://foodpolicyalliance.org/news/sfpa-covid19-message/>



Food banks and hunger relief organizations alone, however, cannot bear the responsibility of meeting this unprecedented need over the long term. The cracks are already showing, with long lines at food banks and growing worries that local food insecurity rates could reach up to one in three adults and up to one in two children<sup>2</sup> due to the pandemic. Average food prices increased 3.5 percent between April 2019 and April 2020, according to the latest inflation data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>3</sup>, further adding to the strain on low-income shoppers. The U.S. food and agriculture supply chain remains strong, resilient and able to meet demand with affordable and abundant food, but there are many unknowns in the coming weeks and months that may continue to temporarily impact prices for certain items.

With these factors in mind, SFPA supports provisions – many of which were included in the House-passed Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act – intended to temporarily boost resources through SNAP, WIC and school meals to ensure that families can put healthy food on the table.

A temporary 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits, bound to economic indicators, would immediately increase access to food for millions of Americans and ease the pressure on feeding organizations without the challenges and delays associated with standing up a new program. SFPA also supports temporarily increasing the monthly minimum SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30. Extending the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program through the summer and until schools reopen, and covering children under the age of six, who would normally be going to daycare programs, under the program would increase the purchasing power of families with kids in closed schools.

In addition, SFPA supports provisions that boost resources available through WIC. Temporarily increasing the cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables in WIC to \$35 per month would ensure that nutritious and healthy food options are available to those who need them the most and address unmet need among vulnerable women and children. SFPA also supports waiver extension through September 30, 2020, including package flexibility. Further, SFPA believes critical populations of children can be helped by increasing the WIC eligibility age from five to six, and by extending eligibility certification for infants and postpartum women from 12 months to two years.

Since the pandemic began, school food service professionals have been on the front line, ensuring that school-aged children and their communities are still able to access nutrient-dense foods. As you know, schools are one of the primary sources of nutrition for many children since they often consume two-thirds of their meals at schools for much of the year. Many of these school nutrition programs and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) centers have assumed significant expenses, while revenue has decreased due to lower meal participation during the pandemic. SFPA supports additional funding to provide emergency financial relief to schools and CACFP centers.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/press-room/feeding-america-study-projects-local-food-insecurity-rates-amid-pandemic-could>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/food-at-home-prices-up-gasoline-and-airfare-prices-down-over-the-year-ended-april-2020.htm>



We appreciate your leadership and urge you to take swift action to keep American families – and the economy – healthy, stable and strong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Adamo".

Chris Adamo  
Vice President  
Federal and Industry Affairs  
Danone North America, PBC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad G. Figel".

Brad G. Figel  
Vice President  
Public Affairs North America  
Mars, Incorporated

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Molly Fogarty".

Molly Fogarty  
Senior Vice President  
Corporate & Government Affairs, U.S.  
Nestlé USA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Langan".

Tom Langan  
North America Director  
Sustainable Business & External Affairs  
Unilever

CC:

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable John Hoeven, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman, House Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Committee  
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Committee  
The Honorable Collin Peterson, Chairman, House Agriculture Committee  
The Honorable Mike Conaway, Ranking Member, House Agriculture Committee