# THE 132ND MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

October 28, 2025

Secretary Brooke Rollins
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Madam Secretary Rollins:

As the Senate chair of the Health and Human Services Committee and a member of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee in the 132nd Maine Legislature, I, along with the undersigned lawmakers, write out of deep concern for the estimated 170,000 Mainers who will lose their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in November.

While Congress stalls on negotiating an end to the federal government shutdown, 12.5% of Maine's population will go hungry. If we focus on children alone, many of whom depend on SNAP, then that percentage rises to 20. As the adults in charge, we simply cannot allow for 1 in 5 Maine children to grow and play on empty stomachs, especially with the colder months on the way.

Aside from the impact on Maine's children, the loss of SNAP benefits will devastate our local economies. More than 160 independent food stores, 136 grocery chain locations, and 80 farmers' markets and farm stands (some of which operate year-round) accept SNAP. For local farms, SNAP and other nutrition incentive programs help generate $1 million in sales every year. If they lose this revenue, they may not survive for another harvest season.

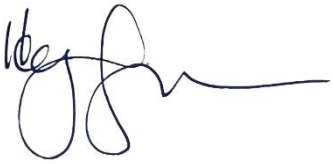
We reiterate the urgent appeal from Hunger Free Maine — a coalition of advocacy and direct service organizations who share the goal of food security for all people in Maine — to U.S. Senator Susan Collins. We call on you and the Administration to release SNAP's contingency funds to pay for partial SNAP benefits. As the coalition wrote to Sen. Collins, local food pantries and non-profits will not be able to fill the enormous gap left by the lack of federal funding.

Earlier this month, I visited with and volunteered for Youth Full Maine and the York County Food Pantry. These dedicated folks confirmed with me that they are struggling to fill their shelves and respond to increased need. My colleagues have heard the same, even before SNAP was cut by this year's reconciliation bill.

The increased strain on food banks because of this lapse in benefits puts access to food at risk for so many families — including financially strained Mainers who rely on local pantries because they don't qualify for other assistance. According to a recent letter sent by members of the U.S. Congress, the USDA has the statutory transfer authority, and possibly other legal authority, at its disposal to supplement these funds.

In 2019, when the federal government shut down, federal elected officials took action to release SNAP contingency funds. During this shutdown, funds have been redirected to keep WIC benefits afloat for women and children. As we hear from desperate parents and families who worry about putting food on the table, we now ask you to ensure the same for SNAP benefits this year. Maine has the highest rate of food insecurity for children in New England, and every Mainer should have enough food to get through the day. Some of us may take a good meal for granted, but thousands of Mainers certainly do not. They are counting on us to act now.

Sincerely,



**Henry Ingwersen**
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