



February 17, 2024

Dear Senator Collins, Senator King, Congressman Golden, and Congresswoman Pingree,

We, the undersigned small businesses, write to implore you to take immediate and continued action to protect SNAP funding due to its vital role in supporting over 400 Maine farmers and small businesses selling at farmers' markets.

From an economic perspective, SNAP can make or break our local food system. The small businesses that sell at Maine farmers' markets support over 1,200 jobs in Maine, the vast majority of which are in rural communities. Any cut to SNAP or other federal grant programs (including, but not limited to, GusNIP, Maine Senior FarmShare, and WIC) will have devastating impacts on Maine farms and small food businesses.

An estimated 10% of gross sales at Maine farmers' markets stem from SNAP and Maine Harvest Bucks (MHB). For crop farmers, that percentage is 20%. SNAP and MHB allow farmers' markets to expand and support a growing number of new small businesses across the state. At several markets, including those in Presque Isle, Belfast, and Augusta, SNAP and MHB sales account for up to 30% of gross sales for the entire market.

In 2024, 90 farmers' markets, CSAs, and farm stands across Maine saw a total of more than \$1.1million in sales from SNAP and MHB. SNAP and MHB fight food insecurity while providing a crucial boost to Maine's rural economy.

Over 180,000 Mainers, mostly seniors and children, receive SNAP to help fight against hunger. This program promotes healthier communities while boosting Maine's small business economy. We have built our businesses around the goal of feeding people and SNAP is an essential part of that.

We ask that you please defend SNAP against cuts and work to protect federal grant programs that help direct SNAP dollars to local farm and food businesses in Maine.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned.