

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 31, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you consider priorities for fiscal year 2014, I write to urge you to restore the funding level for the Women, Infants Children Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) to \$23 million. The FMNP has been a cornerstone in local food system delivery, have reduced food deserts, and have added stability to small family farmers for over 20 years, serving almost 8,500 small farmers in 46 states and tribal territories. The President's Fiscal Year 2013 request was \$17 million, which is a reduction of \$6 million from what was funded in FY 2011.

These cuts of 26%, or \$6 million, are devastating to our most vulnerable citizens who rely on these programs in order to survive. These cuts create minimal savings, but cause disastrous consequences for families across the nation struggling to put food on their tables. Funding for Fiscal Year 2014 is projected to fall short by millions as caseload grows and food prices continue to soar. The cuts to FMNP means hundreds of thousands of families lose access to these fresh fruits and vegetables.

The cuts are a further setback for many of the small farmers that suffered significant loss due to severe weather that ravaged numerous areas of the country, such as extensive drought in the Midwest and spring freezes in the Northeast. The program introduces new families to farmers' markets and facilitates a relationship with family farmers offering additional revenues within the more than 4,000 participating farmers' markets and 3,000 farm stands. In 2011 alone, over 1.9 million families received fresh fruits and vegetables through these programs. The increased sales farmers experience lead to more business for local farm stores in hard-hit rural areas.

Studies demonstrate that when people have access to healthy foods, their diets improve significantly and obesity rates are lower. With Americans spending over \$147 billion annually in obesity-related healthcare costs, the FMNP is a reasonable and responsible approach that increases

the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, which lead to cost savings and increases workforce productivity, earning the nation more savings in the long term.

Thank you for consideration of these critical requests. If you or your staff requires additional information on these requests, please contact Kathryn Tanner (4-9408) on Senator Gillibrand's staff.

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Jon Tester  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator

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*Christina E. Williams*

*Charles Bob*

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*Tom Ubar*