**Dear 2013 Farm Bill Conferees & Congressional Leadership October 27, 2013**

The undersigned California-based organizations are writing in anticipation of the first convening of the 2013 Farm Bill Conference Committee to request that you consider the impact that cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will have on low-income Americans and on our economy, still struggling to recover from the worst recession of our lifetime and the impact of the federal shutdown, which left many service sector employees without work for nearly two weeks.

We understand that both the House Bill ([H.R. 2642](http://rules.house.gov/bill/hr-2642) & [Nutrition Title Cuts](http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20130916/BILLS-113hr3102ih.pdf)) and the bi-partisan Senate Bill ([S.3240](http://www.ag.senate.gov/issues/agriculture-reform-food-and-jobs-act-of-2012)) include cuts to SNAP.   These cuts are not acceptable during a time of stagnant poverty rates and increasing inequality.

Instead, Congress should be working to strengthen the program to better reduce hunger & malnutrition. The Institute of Medicine [recently reported that SNAP benefits are not enough](http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2013/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-Examining-the-Evidence-to-Define-Benefit-Adequacy.aspx) to meet a family's basic food needs and there has long been a need to strengthen SNAP recipient access to more local and fresh food. The Farm Bill could have, and should have, been an opportunity for us to learn more about why the program isn't reaching all those who are hungry.  Instead, the House passed a Farm Bill without a Nutrition Title, without a single hearing on hunger in fact, bypassing our ability to address the shameful reality that one in six, and one in five children,  are going hungry right here in America.

With one in four children living in poverty and the highest Supplemental Poverty Rate in the United States (Source: [US Census Bureau](http://www.census.gov/hhes/povmeas/methodology/supplemental/research/Short_ResearchSPM2011.pdf)), California is home to more SNAP eligible households than any other state in the Nation.  We also have the [lowest participation rate in the Country](http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/snap/FILES/Participation/Techpartrate2008-2010.pdf), with only just half of those eligible participating.   While California's legislature and the Governor work hard to address hunger in our state, these efforts will be crippled if the cuts proposed by Congress are enacted. This is why both California Senators [have signed this letter asking the Conferees](http://frac.org/pdf/senate_fbconference_ltroct.pdf) to resist adding barriers to participation in SNAP and why California’s Congressional Delegation had a bi-partisan vote opposing the House bill to cut SNAP.

We urge you to reject proposals and dialogue meant to stigmatize Americans who rely on SNAP to prevent hunger and come together to pass a Conference Committee Farm Bill that strengthens SNAP and improves access to affordable, healthy food for all Americans.

**This statement has been issued by XX Organizations in California**

**Statewide Organizations:**

**Regional Organizations:**