



March 27, 2025

Members of the Senate HHS Committee:

As leaders of the five Feeding America food banks serving Minnesota, we write to express our disappointment in the lack of additional funding for hunger relief in the Governor's revised budget proposal, and to encourage this Committee to prioritize funding for food banks and food shelves when putting together your budget for the 2025-26 biennium.

As you heard from many of us at the February 19th hearing on legislation aimed at addressing the ongoing hunger crisis, need for emergency food assistance is at an all-time high. Second Harvest Heartland's recent statewide hunger survey showed that nearly 20% of Minnesota households could not afford enough food for themselves and their families last year, while data from The Food Group showed that Minnesotans visited food shelves a total of 9 million times last year – far surpassing the 7.5 million visits in 2023 and nearly doubling the 5 million visits recorded in 2022.

Making matters worse, the USDA announced earlier this month that it was cancelling a total of \$1 billion in funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LPFA) and Local Food for Schools programs, cutting out a critical source of food for countless food shelves and food banks alike—and a critical source of funding for local farmers and producers. More recently, we learned that the USDA had also frozen \$500 million in funding through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), dealing an unexpected blow to our food banks as we struggle to meet this unsustainable increase in demand.

When paired with the high and still-rising cost of groceries and the disastrous impact that proposed reductions to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits would have on the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity, Minnesota's hunger-relief network cannot weather this storm without critical assistance from the state, specifically the funding outlined in SF1348 (Boldon) and SF1112 (Mann)—bills which have bipartisan support in both bodies.

Thank you for your leadership during these challenging times for so many Minnesotans and their families, and for keeping food insecure Minnesotans in mind in this year's budgeting process.

Sincerely,

Allison O'Toole, CEO
Second Harvest Heartland

Virginia Witherspoon, ED
Channel One Food Bank

Shaye Moris, President/CEO
Second Harvest Northland

Susie Novak Boelter, ED
North Country Food Bank

Melissa Sobolik, CEO
Great Plains Food Bank