



I write today on behalf of **[Insert name of your agency]**, in opposition to any cuts in funding to (or block granting of) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), spending on SNAP makes good economic sense in addition to providing significant supplemental support to Americans struggling to feed themselves and their families in this prolonged economic downturn.

As CBO describes in an April 2012 report, the SNAP program is an “automatic stabilizer.” Its number of beneficiaries (85% of whom live below the federal poverty level) and the amount of spending increase automatically during tough economic times. The post 2007-2009 Recession years continue to remain very difficult for the tens of millions of Americans and their families who are un- or under-employed, as tracked by the Department of Labor monthly. One key indicator, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in May, is that the rate of long-term unemployment, currently at 43% of all unemployed, has hovered above 40 percent since 2010 or about twice the peak of previous recessions.

The impact of the economic downturn on the SNAP program is measurable. According to the CBO, the number of people receiving SNAP benefits increased by 70 percent between fiscal years 2007 and 2011 (the most recent data available). Moreover, CBO projected in March 2012 that the number of people who receive SNAP benefits will continue to rise from 2012 through FY 2014.

In a separate CBO report on the impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, dated May 2012, CBO found that SNAP represented a significant supplement to income of 30 percent for all participating households and 45 percent for households with children (children have been notably impacted by the recent economic downturn). Moreover, CBO found that the increases in disposable income were likely to boost purchases more for lower-income than higher-income households. This is because lower-income households spend their benefits, such as SNAP, immediately on goods and services. The SNAP money quickly passes to the marketplace, where it is needed to boost the economy.

For the duality of the critical benefits SNAP provides to both people in need and the ailing economy, we respectfully urge you to oppose any proposed cuts to the SNAP program within the Senate’s draft “Farm Bill,” to oppose reconstituting the program as a block grant, and to support efforts during Floor consideration of the bill to return SNAP funding to existing levels.

Sincerely,

**[Insert name and Agency]**

(Sources: CBO Report, April 2012; Link: <http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/04-19-SNAP.pdf>;  
BLS EMPLOYMENT SITUATION May 2012, 06/01/12; Link: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>; CBO,  
May 2012;  
Link: [http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/05-25-Impact\\_of\\_ARRA.pdf](http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/05-25-Impact_of_ARRA.pdf).)