



**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR**

May 8, 2025

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Angie Craig
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member, Senate Committee
on Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, Chairman Boozman, and Ranking Member Klobuchar, and
Members of North Carolina’s congressional delegation:

As Governor of North Carolina, I am deeply concerned about reported proposals from Washington that would shift the cost of food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to states. SNAP, known in North Carolina as Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), is a lifeline for more than 1.4 million North Carolinians—children, older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, and working families—who rely on the program to put food on the table. As the cost of living, including groceries, continues to rise, we should not be making it harder to eat. Hunger makes doing the most basic things harder—it is harder for kids to learn, harder for adults to work, and harder for seniors to stay healthy. Cuts to SNAP will negatively impact the well-being of North Carolinians and will undermine our food systems and state and local economy.

SNAP supports one in eight North Carolinians. More than two-thirds of participating families have children and one-third include a family member who is an older adult or person with a disability. SNAP benefits are modest—about \$5.70 per person per day—but meaningfully improve health. A recent North Carolina study showed that older adults’ (65 years and older) participation in SNAP was associated with fewer hospital and long-term care admissions and emergency department visits and estimated Medicaid cost-savings of \$2,360 per person annually.

Beyond the direct benefit to families, SNAP is essential to North Carolina’s economy. SNAP dollars are spent at more than 9,200 retailers across the state. The vast majority of SNAP benefits, about 84%, are spent in North Carolina supermarkets and superstores. Every \$1 in SNAP benefits generates up to \$1.80 in local economic activity—supporting more than 9,100 North Carolina jobs across grocery and supporting industries, including for farmers, grocers, manufacturers, delivery drivers, and many other jobs in the food supply chain.

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, SNAP has also been a vital part of our state's recovery efforts. North Carolina saw the highest number of applications in the month following Helene (169,000 new applications in October 2024) since Hurricane Florence in 2018. SNAP enrollment has remained high in the 25 western counties most impacted by the storm, where more than 239,500 people relied on SNAP as of March 2025—an increase of 13,400 people since before the storm hit in September 2024. Given the multiplier effect of SNAP benefits, it is one of the fastest, most effective ways to provide economic relief during an economic downturn or after a natural disaster. These benefits have been critical to families who have lost homes and livelihoods and will be working to rebuild for months and years to come.

Proposals to force states to pay a portion of SNAP benefits would hit North Carolina hard. In 2024, North Carolina received \$2.8 billion in federal SNAP funds for the cost of benefits. Shifting even 5% of that significant cost would require the state to come up with \$140 million in state funds annually to continue the program as is. On the high end, proposals that would require the state to cost share up to 25% of the cost of benefits would require the state to identify roughly \$700 million in state funds for SNAP. North Carolina's state budget simply cannot absorb this cost, which would force our state to cut already modest benefits, limit eligibility, or both.

Cuts to SNAP would undermine rural economies in particular and threaten the viability of local grocers in places where food access is already limited. North Carolina has 11 rural counties with only one supermarket or superstore that accepts SNAP; that number increases to 19 rural counties with two or fewer supermarkets or superstores. These stores are often the only full-service food options in rural, low-income areas and often serve a high proportion of customers using SNAP benefits to help pay for food. SNAP cuts will put more pressure on these stores, making it harder for these stores to maintain jobs, keep their doors open, and continue being a reliable source of food and employment in their communities. Food banks will not be able to make up for the loss of food benefits. According to the Food Research and Action Center, SNAP provides nine meals for every one meal a food bank can supply. With grocery prices still high, food banks are already stretched to the limit and cannot serve as a substitute for a robust federal nutrition program.

SNAP is one of the most effective, efficient, and essential tools we have to fight poverty and hunger. It supports working families and bolsters rural economies. I urge Congress to reject any proposals that would force states to cost-share and pay for SNAP benefits for the first time in the program's history and instead, to strengthen this vital program so it can continue to serve North Carolinians in their times of need.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to working with you to protect and strengthen SNAP for all who depend on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Josh Stein", written in a cursive, flowing style.

Josh Stein
Governor