



February 24, 2022

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro, Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

RE: Request for Extension of USDA Waiver Authority

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Granger, and Vice Chairman Shelby:

On behalf of the [Food and Regional Agriculture Member \(FARM\) Policy Committee](#) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), we are writing to ask you to extend U.S. Department of Agriculture's nationwide waiver authority through the 2022-2023 school year.

As the association of local governments in the metropolitan Washington region, COG supports measures that will increase food security in the region. Given the impact of the ongoing public health crisis on families and children, continued flexibility is needed to meet students' nutritional needs.

The food security challenges facing our residents and schools mirror those seen nationally. COVID-19 has exacerbated food insecurity everywhere, and communities of color and households with children have been disproportionately impacted. In the Metropolitan Washington region, our schools' food and nutrition services divisions continue to have to pivot to provide healthy meals safely, all while grappling with supply chain challenges and labor constraints. The flexibility that USDA has provided to states and schools through waivers has been critical to enabling them to respond in innovative ways and ensure that those children experiencing food insecurity have access to quality meals. This needs to continue.

Reducing food insecurity is a central goal of the FARM Committee and one of COG's legislative priorities. We hope that USDA will continue to support schools and other sponsors beyond the end of June as we recover from the pandemic. We must ensure that they can continue to operate as seamlessly as possible to provide meals to students.

Please contact Lindsay Smith, COG's Regional Food Systems Planner, at (202) 962-3309 or [lsmith@mwcog.org](mailto:lsmith@mwcog.org) if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mary Cheh in black ink.

Mary Cheh  
Chair, FARM Committee  
District of Columbia

Handwritten signature of Craig Rice in black ink.

Craig Rice  
Vice Chair, FARM Committee  
Montgomery County, MD

Handwritten signature of Jon Stehle in black ink.

Jon Stehle  
Vice Chair, FARM Committee  
City of Fairfax, VA

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro, The Honorable Patrick Leahy, The Honorable Kay Granger, and The Honorable Richard Shelby:  
February 24, 2022

cc: The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor  
The Honorable Virginia Foxx Ranking Member, House Committee on Education and Labor  
Congressional Delegation for the Metropolitan Washington Region