



January 15, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Increase in Benefits of Federal Food Assistance Programs**

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

The Society for Nutrition Education (SNE\*) supports an increase in benefits of federal food assistance programs that impact the daily food security of program participants. SNE urges that these investments be included in the upcoming economic recovery package.

As our nation faces an overwhelming economic upheaval, the greatest impact is felt by the growing population of low-income adults and children. Through the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program), more than 30 million adults and children received benefits in November 2008: about 1 in 10 Americans. During the same month, more than 11 million adults and nearly 700,000 children experienced real hunger, almost a 50% increase from November 2007. As Americans continue to deal with lay-offs, job losses, and reduced work time, these numbers will continue to grow. At the same time, service agencies, such as food banks, have less money and fewer resources to provide more food.

Increased federal food assistance program benefits will stimulate the economy by increasing the purchasing power of low-income people and putting much needed dollars into local economies, and in turn into the entire food system, from production to local retail food outlets. Higher SNAP benefits impact the economy through a "multiplier effect," creating a greater stimulus effect than many other options. For every dollar spent on SNAP, the gross domestic product (GDP) grows by \$1.73 making an increase in SNAP benefits one of the best stimulus investments available. \*\*

Population groups with the lowest income levels have the poorest quality diets and highest incidence of diet-related health problems. Nutrition assistance programs offer an opportunity to increase the ability of low-income individuals and families across the age spectrum to access healthy foods. Many of the food assistance programs also have a strong food and nutrition education component to help families and individuals choose and prepare healthier foods. Not only do these programs benefit the wellbeing of this segment of the population, they have the potential to ease demands on the already saturated health care system by reducing the incidence of preventable chronic diseases.

The USDA is charged not only with supporting sustainable agriculture but also with assuring adequate nutrition to low-income households through various federal food assistance programs. These programs include: SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; WIC – Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children; NSLP - National School Lunch Program; SBP - School Breakfast Program; SFSP - Summer Food Service Programs; CACFP – Child and Adult Food Program; TEFAP – The Emergency Food Assistance Program; CFNP – Community Food and Nutrition Program; Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Additional federal programs which support low-income people include: WIC Farmers Market; Senior Farmers Market; CSFP - Commodity Supplemental Food Program; the Older Americans Act Elderly Nutrition Program.

SNE believes that a stimulus package benefiting low-income adults and children is crucial to help them confront the many challenges they face in these difficult times. These programs must be strengthened to help more American households meet basic needs. Supporting our most vulnerable citizens will improve health and provide current and future benefit to society while helping to improve our economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our position as you work on the economic recovery package.

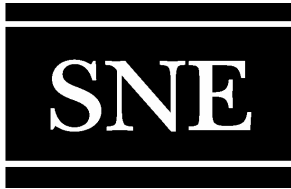
Sincerely,



Martha Archuleta, PhD, RD  
President, Society for Nutrition Education

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January 15, 2009

The Honorable John Boehner  
House Minority Leader  
H-204 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Increase in Benefits of Federal Food Assistance Programs**

Dear Representative Boehner:

The Society for Nutrition Education (SNE\*) supports an increase in benefits of federal food assistance programs that impact the daily food security of program participants. SNE urges that these investments be included in the upcoming economic recovery package.

As our nation faces an overwhelming economic upheaval, the greatest impact is felt by the growing population of low-income adults and children. Through the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program), more than 30 million adults and children received benefits in November 2008: about 1 in 10 Americans. During the same month, more than 11 million adults and nearly 700,000 children experienced real hunger, almost a 50% increase from November 2007. As Americans continue to deal with lay-offs, job losses, and reduced work time, these numbers will continue to grow. At the same time, service agencies, such as food banks, have less money and fewer resources to provide more food.

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SNE believes that a stimulus package benefiting low-income adults and children is crucial to help them confront the many challenges they face in these difficult times. These programs must be strengthened to help more American households meet basic needs. Supporting our most vulnerable citizens will improve health and provide current and future benefit to society while helping to improve our economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our position as you work on the economic recovery package.

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January 15, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-221 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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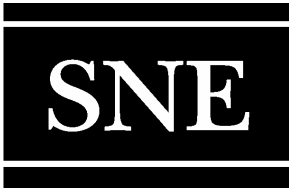
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January 15, 2009

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Senate Minority Leader  
S-230 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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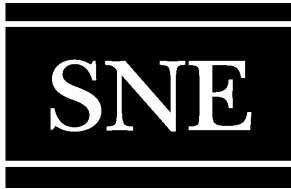
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January 15, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
Senate Russell Building, Room 328-A  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Increase in Benefits of Federal Food Assistance Programs**

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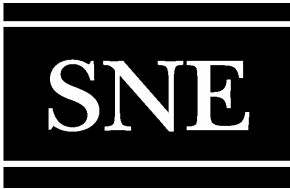
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January 15, 2009

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Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
Senate Russell Building, Room 328-A  
Washington, DC 20510

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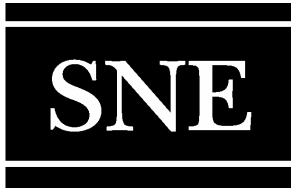
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Chairman  
House Agriculture Committee  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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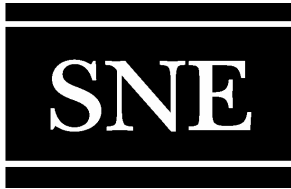
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Martha Archuleta, PhD, RD  
President, Society for Nutrition Education

*\* - SNE is an international organization of nutrition education professionals dedicated to promoting healthful sustainable food choices and sharing a vision of healthy people in healthy communities. The nutrition education programs provided by members of SNE can be most beneficial when people have access to affordable, healthier food. Our members conduct research in education, behavior and communication; develop and disseminate innovative nutrition education strategies; and communicate information of food, nutrition, and health issues to students, professionals, policy makers, and the public. Publications describing this work can be found in the SNE peer-reviewed Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, the leading research periodical devoted to behavioral nutrition, nutrition education, research and policy. [www.sne.org](http://www.sne.org)*

**\*\* - Reference: Assessing the Macro Economic Impact of Fiscal Stimulus, 2008. Mark Zandi. Moody 's. <http://www.economy.com/mark-zandi/documents/assissing-the-impact-of-the-fiscal-stimulus.pdf>**