

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 16, 2018

Mr. Brandon Lipps
Acting Deputy Undersecretary
Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Acting Deputy Undersecretary Lipps:

We write to express concern about potential disruptions in Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) service for direct to consumer and farmers markets that accept the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

In 2017, over 7,300 farmers and markets accepted SNAP, resulting in over \$22 million in purchases directly into the local food economy. Providing the ability for SNAP participants to purchase food at farmers markets is a win-win. Not only does this provide critical access to healthy, local fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods, it also helps family farmers to develop important local markets and expand business opportunities.

We recently learned that Novo Dia, one of the primary vendors that services farmers markets, will cease operations later this month, leaving many markets without EBT capabilities during the height of the farmers' market season. Any disruption in EBT service at these markets would have devastating impacts on SNAP families as well as farmers who sell their products to these local families. These families would also no longer be able to earn incentives by purchasing fruits and vegetables through SNAP, making it even more challenging for SNAP participants to afford healthy meals for their families.

We ask that the Food and Nutrition Service explore every possible option to ensure there is no disruption in EBT service at farmers markets during this critical market time. Local farmers and families depend on the ability to use SNAP in these markets and the consequences of any shutdown, no matter how brief, could be incredibly detrimental to the growing relationship between SNAP families and farmers.

Sincerely,









Jack Reed

Amy Klobuchar

Richard Blumenthal

Chuck Schumer

Tina Smith

Cory McCasill

Mitt F. Romney

John D. Dingell

Kirsten Gillibrand

Dianne Feinstein