

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2022

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Harris:

As the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Subcommittee considers its Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) priorities, **we ask you to support \$25 million for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI).**

Forty million Americans still lack reasonable access to nutritious and affordable food. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the food insecurity crisis and revealed how essential grocery stores, food suppliers, and their employees are to communities. HFFI aims to improve access to healthy food in underserved areas, create and preserve quality jobs, and revitalize low-income communities and communities of color.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill) reauthorized the HFFI program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Housed within USDA's Rural Development agency, HFFI is administered by an intermediary National Fund Manager, authorized to use HFFI funds to offer innovative financing products tailored to the unique needs of food access projects. Although current funding levels support only a grant program, providing \$25 million in FY 2023 appropriations would enable HFFI to leverage private capital and other program dollars at a scale of 1:4, reaching more underserved communities by combining federal and non-federal investments. The funding would allow the program to expand its investment products from grants to loans, establish funding programs for coalitions and partnerships and support a variety of food enterprises, targeting specific solutions to the needs of rural, urban, and tribal communities.

There is significant need in states and cities across the country to address the lack of grocery stores in low-income communities. Further capitalization of the program would extend healthy food access efforts in underserved communities and the economic benefits of HFFI to the entire country — to a degree many times larger than the initial federal investment.

HFFI projects can be completed quickly and have the ability to generate major economic impacts by creating and preserving local grocery stores that provide well-paying, steady jobs. On average, a 50,000 square foot supermarket creates 250 full-time jobs, while a 10,000 square foot supermarket

creates 25 full and part time jobs¹. This is in addition to associated construction work and expanded market opportunities for American farmers. In addition, investments in food supply chain enterprises like distributors and food manufacturers can create economic benefits for rural and urban communities.

Based on lessons learned from previous HFFI programs, we fully expect additional investments into the program to leverage significant private investment, support quality jobs and generate local tax revenue by strengthening local and regional economies in America's underserved communities.

We appreciate your leadership in investing in equitable access to fresh, healthy food and community revitalization to date, and ask that you continue to recognize the value of HFFI by providing \$25 million in FY 2023.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



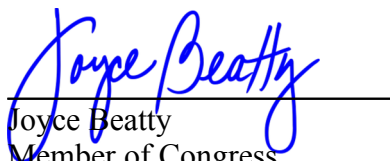
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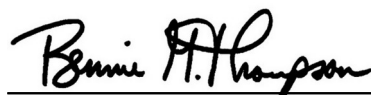


Gwen S. Moore
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¹ http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/access-to-healthy-food.original.pdf



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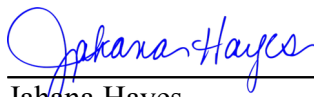
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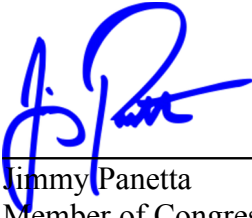
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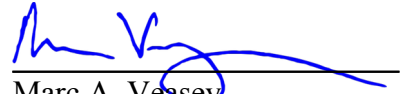
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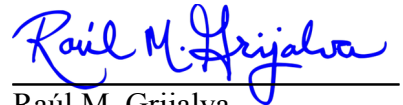
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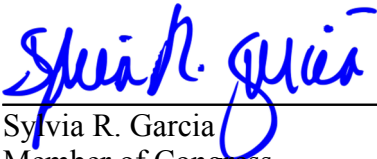
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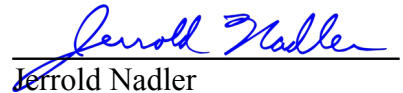
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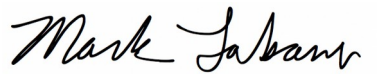
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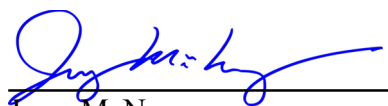
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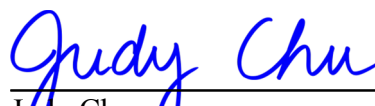
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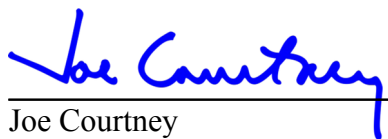
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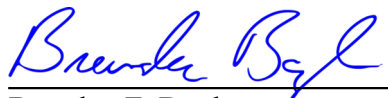
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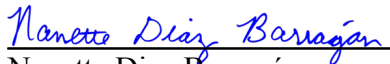
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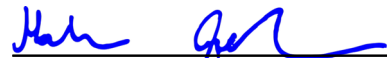
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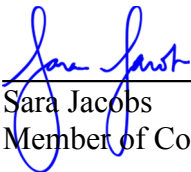
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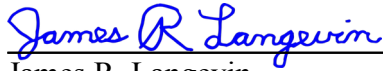
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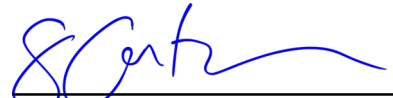
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