

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 10, 2013

Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Thank you for your ongoing partnership with New York after several natural disasters have devastated the state. I request your assistance again for several Mohawk Valley counties in Upstate, NY that were devastated by flooding on June 27th and 28th. Several of these counties were hit hard by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee less than 2 years ago.

Specifically, we seek your renewed support to 1) extend the deadline for replacement Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) benefits for 30 days in the disaster impacted counties, 2) approve the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) when submitted by the State, and 3) send additional Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) resources to the counties most impacted by the flooding.

Governor Cuomo has asked for federal individual assistance for 4 heavily impacted counties: Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, and Montgomery. Hundreds of homes in these counties have been damaged, and thousands more faced power outages for days after the storm that rendered perishable foods unsafe to consume.

Emergency services, including local food pantries and soup kitchens, have been ensuring immediate emergency food needs are met, but the clean-up and healing in these towns and villages will take months.

Replacing lost food for SNAP families in devastated areas will enable them to focus their energy on re-building. Please extend the deadline for applying for replacement SNAP benefits for an additional 30 days to allow sufficient time for affected families to submit their applications. In addition, we need to connect affected families with D-SNAP as soon as the required authorizations are in place, making food one less worry for families who have lost so much. Lastly, food pantries in the affected communities have risen to the immediate challenge, but additional TEFAP resources are needed as they face increased demand for some time to come.

Thank you again for your continued support of New York, especially during these critical times after epic flooding. We look forward to continuing to work together.

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator