

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 21, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

As our nation continues to suffer in the midst of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we write to demand that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) allocate equitable resources to the Northeast region under the Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

Before COVID-19 public health crisis began, more than 3.6 million people in the Northeast region experienced food insecurity, and during the pandemic these numbers have only increased. Since then, the USDA established the Farmers to Families Food Box Program to create partnerships with distributors and organizations, to purchase up to \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy, and meat products to supply to families in need. But in recent months, we have learned about troubling discrepancies in how the USDA has allocated the program's funds.

Despite representing the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the country, the Northeast region received the second-lowest allocation of any geographic region—only \$46 million (4.4 percent) of the total \$1.2 billion made in the first round of USDA's distributions. Given that USDA has already initiated a second round of distributions between July 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>, we write to demand that our constituents receive equitable access to the Farmers to Families Food Box Program going forward.

In an effort to better understand USDA's ongoing implementation of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, we request that USDA answer the following requests no later than August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020:

1. Provide an explanation of the methodology USDA used to determine contract assignments.
2. Provide an explanation of safeguards USDA will take to ensure that the proportion of program allocations reflect the proportion of food insecurity represented in a given geographic region.
3. Provide a detailed explanation of how the second round of funding will be distributed.

We thank you for your urgent attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**



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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

/s/  
James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

/s/  
David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress