

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition & Forestry

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition & Forestry

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Dr. Virginia Foxx
Chair
House Committee on Education and the
Workforce

The Honorable Dr. Andy Harris
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Robert "Bobby" Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and the
Workforce

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

September 30, 2023

Dear House and Senate Leaders,

As the companies and organizations committed to meeting the dietary and nutrition needs of the more than 6.7 million Americans enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), we write to express our severe concerns about the impact that even a short-term shutdown of federal government services could have on the ability of those families to get the food they need.

The WIC program is specifically tailored to help give pregnant women, moms, babies and young children the best possible start. The program currently serves more than half of all babies born in the United States. A government shutdown will have immediate negative impacts on WIC, placing additional strain on a patchwork of contingency funds across 89 different states, territories, and Indian Tribal Organizations. Any government shutdown puts significant stress not only on these most vulnerable Americans but also on the supply chain that works every day to make sure their needs are met.

As retailers, we are particularly concerned about the ability of stores to meet the needs of their communities, and the stress that WIC customers will face from the uncertainty surrounding their benefits. As suppliers, we are concerned about the potential of a government shutdown to cause additional disruptions in the supply chains, authorizations, and regulatory approvals that ensure WIC eligible foods are where they need to be, and in the necessary quantities. And as anti-hunger and nutrition advocates, we are concerned about the additional stress that the potential disruption

and unavailability of WIC benefits puts on our nation's anti-hunger safety net and the families we serve. On their own, food banks and others in the charitable food sector are unable to meet the unique nutritional needs of pregnant women, moms, babies, and young children.

Throughout its history, WIC has seen strong bipartisan support, and our companies and organizations are not here to place blame or take a political side. We are here to make sure that the 6.7 million Americans who count on WIC benefits to feed their families can continue to access the program. We implore you to take every necessary step to ensure that WIC is funded in the short and long term to provide those most vulnerable among us with the critical support they need to access quality, nutritious food and other vital nutrition assistance.

Sincerely,

Alliance to End Hunger
Consumer Brands Association
Feeding America
FMI - The Food Industry Association
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
International Dairy Foods Association

International Fresh Produce Association
National Grocers Association
National Retail Federation
National WIC Association
Retail Industry Leaders Association
Share Our Strength