

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

September 13, 2017

The Honorable Rick Scott  
Governor, State of Florida  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Scott,

We want to thank you for your administration's preparation and support offered to our constituents throughout the state for disaster relief. As Florida rebuilds and responds, we implore you to consider all available federal food assistance options, along with other federal disaster relief requests. Ensuring that Floridians have access to quality food and nutrition during these critical times can help to alleviate the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma.

One of the most effective ways in which we can help those immediately impacted is by building upon the success of many federal food assistance programs that are designed to root out deprivation and hunger in the unfortunate instances of natural disaster and catastrophe.

As you know, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey and Katrina, both Texas and Louisiana quickly petitioned the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for waivers so that families hardest hit by natural disasters would be able to access critically needed food assistance. Based on previous disaster-related requests by similarly affected states, we urge your administration to work closely with USDA to coordinate a comprehensive response to address the food needs of disaster survivors, including but not limited to all the following:

- Request an evacuee policy of FNS and surrounding states that allows affected residents to receive SNAP if they have evacuated out of Florida, and were not eligible prior.
- Activate 'Disaster-SNAP' that offers replacement and supplemental benefits for regular SNAP recipients who lose food during disaster or have other disaster-related expenses, and extends benefits to many households which are not ordinarily eligible but were impacted by the disaster.
- Request that USDA significantly increase the number of food packages for food banks through Commodity Supplemental Food, Disaster Household Distribution and other programs.
- Request that low-income WIC mothers be allowed to replace lost, spoiled or damaged baby formula and baby food, and allow beneficiaries to buy substitute foods when eligible foods are not available due to shortages.
- Request an extension of certification and recertification periods that allows SNAP households to rebuild and respond to devastation.
- Offer free meals through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program to all students until affected areas have been cleared and families are back on track.

We appreciate the requests you have already made in allowing SNAP recipients to purchase hot and ready-to-eat meals when other forms of food are no longer available and administering the early issuance of SNAP benefits. We look forward to working with you on these requests and ensuring that Floridians, their families and their communities receive proper nourishment during this period recovery.

Respectfully,



Al Lawson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist  
Member of Congress



Val Demings  
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress