

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Pam Miller
Administrator
United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Administrator Miller:

We write today in support of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service's (VDACS) request to operate a Disaster Household Distribution Program in Virginia due to the ongoing public health emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19. Timely approval of this request is needed to ensure families in Virginia have access to healthy foods during this crisis.

In Virginia, many households are out of work due to the ongoing public health emergency. This has created an unprecedented increase in need for food services across the Commonwealth. With little time to prepare, many families have found themselves without the finances to maintain a healthy diet. Unfortunately, congregate food distribution is not an option at this time due to the potential spread of COVID-19. A household distribution program is required to ensure the safe and efficient distribution of food to families in need.

The Virginia Federation of Foodbanks – working in conjunction with VDACS – will operate the Disaster Household Distribution Program in the Commonwealth. Virginia foodbanks will utilize their existing inventories of USDA foods and donated foods to help supplement families' nutritional needs. Participants in the program will not be required to complete long and burdensome application forms. The goal will be to limit interaction between staff, volunteers, and recipients to ensure the safe and expeditious delivery of food to families.

In order to ensure Virginians in need are able to access food in a safe and timely manner, we urge you approve the Commonwealth's request to operate a Disaster Household Distribution Program. Thank you for your consideration of this request and all you do to ensure Americans have access to healthy foods.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator