

ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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October 30, 2025

The Honorable Josh Riley
128 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pat Ryan
1708 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Riley and Ryan:

On behalf of Ulster County and the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), I'm writing to urge you to work toward an immediate bipartisan agreement that ensures continued federal funding for essential nutrition and home energy assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

Counties like ours are on the front lines of delivering these programs to residents. SNAP and HEAP are lifelines — not luxuries — for millions of New Yorkers, helping families, seniors, and individuals meet their most basic needs: food and heat. Any disruption in these programs would have an immediate and devastating effect on our communities, especially as colder weather approaches.

In Ulster County alone, 18,000 people rely on SNAP to afford enough to eat. That's nearly one in 10 residents. And more than 15,000 Ulster County households depend on HEAP to keep their homes warm during the winter months. If Congress fails to act, these families will see their benefits cut off as early as November 1 for SNAP and November 15 for HEAP. Thousands may not be able to put food on the table next week or heat their homes, endangering public health and welfare.

Counties do not have the means to backfill the \$700 million statewide gap in federal funding. We simply don't have the financial capacity. Counties are operating under strict fiscal constraints and are responsible for administering these federally funded programs at the local level. A lapse in federal support will create confusion, hardship, and administrative chaos across our human services systems.

Moreover, a disruption in SNAP and HEAP benefits would reverberate throughout our local economies. These benefits are spent directly in neighborhood grocery stores, farmers' markets, and small businesses — supporting local jobs and generating economic activity. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), every dollar in SNAP benefits generates more than a dollar and a half in economic impact. When these programs are interrupted, that spending disappears, weakening our economy and straining our businesses and service providers.

We respectfully urge you to take immediate action to reach an agreement that maintains federal funding for SNAP and HEAP and prevents service disruptions for millions of New Yorkers.

We also urge USDA to use all available flexibility and contingency funds to sustain SNAP benefits until federal funding is restored, so families don't experience an interruption in this critical support.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for your continued partnership with New York's counties in serving our residents.

Sincerely,



Jen Metzger
Ulster County Executive