



Building resilient & equitable  
food systems in West Virginia

304-926-0567

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To members of the West Virginia Legislature:

At the West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition we strive to build the local food and agriculture system in West Virginia in a way that provides viable incomes for farmers and local food businesses and ensure all residents have access to locally produced food. The Coalition, along with its partners, oppose HB 4001 because we believe that it would do harm to the food system and our hard-working farmers here in West Virginia.

We believe that every dollar spent in the food system ultimately promotes agriculture and research indicates that losing federal SNAP dollars would further exasperate food dessert and food access issues. Many rural residents live miles from good jobs and grocery stores. These rural populations also lack access to public transportation. Implementing work requirements and asset testing, as HB 4001 recommends, harms rural populations who lack access to good paying jobs and the funding to transport themselves to volunteer positions. This population would be greatly affected if rural grocery stores were to close due to less food dollars being spent in those communities.

You may be asking yourself, “why do farmers care about SNAP benefits?” To quote a North Dakota Farmer Gretchen Dobervich, “... 78% of Farm Bill funding [SNAP funding] is used to ensure farmers' products reach American families struggling with hunger... SNAP supports our economy and keeps our families healthy and strong.” To quote Jefferson County farmer, Leslie Randall, “Farmers work long hours and the profit margins are tight, but SNAP helps us as much as it helps our hungry neighbors. In 2016, \$6,866 was spent at the Charles Town Farmers' Market through this program. That's just one instance of the many farmer's markets across the state where money is going straight to the farmers.”

Maintaining a SNAP program that imports and circulates federal dollars in West Virginia's food system is an issue of economics. The program benefits rural populations, grocery stores, local food businesses, and farmers. It's good for West Virginia's economy. . We hope you consider the impact HB 4001 would have on our growing farm economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Spencer Moss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Spencer Moss  
West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition