



# City of Austin

301 W. Second St., Austin, TX 78701

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December 15, 2011

The Honorable John Carter  
408 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Carter,

As Mayor of the City of Austin, I am writing on behalf of our community to express our support for the 2012 Farm Bill. Austin and cities throughout the United States face multiple health, social and environmental problems connected to food. Supporting public health and protecting our environment are essential to our city and the region's viability and livability.

Currently, less than half (47%) of our residents who are income eligible for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) are enrolled. As a community we need to do more to make sure those in need are receiving this assistance and we commit to you that we will. As an example, this year we will promote on-line applications and provide assistance via computers and trained employees at our library locations to help citizens through the application process.

SNAP is also a significant economic stimulus program. Every \$5 of SNAP money equals \$9 in economic benefit to our local stores and economy. While helping our working families, our senior citizens on fixed incomes and our disabled people we are also able to support our economy.

Healthy students are better prepared to learn which helps our schools help our community. Studies have shown that breakfast has a beneficial impact on children's behavior and learning. Those that participate in the school breakfast and lunch assistance programs also have better attendance than those who are eligible but not enrolled.

As you know, Central Texas is experiencing a record drought and forecasts do not show it ending in the near future. With that in mind, our community is discussing how we can innovate our local agricultural practices to survive the anticipated drought conditions. What is learned here would likely be useful throughout Texas much of the country. We will also benefit from growing our local food production system which will help us address climate change and improve our food security.

We ask for your support for the 2012 Farm bill and we will do our best to make sure families know about the programs that exist to help them make ends meet. The many programs funded by the Farm bill help families in need, sends more money into our local economy, encourages conservation of the very resources that make food production possible and will allow Austin and Central Texas to continue to address the needs of a growing population.

*The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.  
Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request.*

Thank you for your attention to this issue and all for all of your efforts on Austin's behalf.

Sincerely,  
Lee Leffingwell  
Mayor