

April 21, 2016

The Honorable Marcia Fudge
U.S. House of Representatives
2344 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Fudge,

As Ohio produce growers, fresh-cut processors and distributors of fresh fruits and vegetables to school districts all over Ohio, we write to express our strong opposition to changing the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) to include "all forms" of processed fruits and vegetables in the House Education and the Workforce Committee's 2016 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill H.R. 5003.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program benefits Ohio children, Ohio companies and Ohio's economy.

This school year, 235 low-income Ohio elementary schools and more than 100,000 students participate in the FFVP. These students benefit from receiving a fresh fruit or vegetable snack at school several days a week. We have seen firsthand the benefits of the FFVP – it introduces young children to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, increases their fruit and vegetable consumption, improves their acceptance of healthier school meals and improves the healthfulness of the school food environment. In addition, a recent study by the University of Arkansas demonstrates that participation in the FFVP helps to reduce childhood obesity.

School districts all over Ohio want to keep the FFVP "fresh" and have sent you and the Committee a letter (attached) stating their position. We invite you visit an Ohio FFVP school with us to see for yourself how the FFVP is benefitting children.

The FFVP is also important to our businesses and our local and state economy. Our companies and our employees are honored to supply fresh fruits and vegetables to FFVP schools in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, East Cleveland City Schools, Akron Public Schools, Cincinnati Public School, Columbus City Schools, Canton City School District, Dayton Public Schools, Youngstown City Schools, and other schools all over Ohio. FFVP generates over \$4.8 million in fresh produce sales each year in Ohio, which supports a number of jobs in your district, as well as throughout the state.

Changing the FFVP to include "all forms" of processed fruits and vegetable will not expand the Program to more children, but will in fact deprive these children of fresh fruits and vegetables. Ohio's children already have plenty of access to processed fruits and vegetables in school breakfast and lunch. Introducing children to fresh fruits and vegetables in the FFVP results in these students choosing more fruits and vegetables, of all types, in school meals.

For the benefit of Ohio's children, we ask you to reconsider your position on the FFVP. We ask for your support in keeping the FFVP "fresh" in the 2016 Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

Very respectfully,

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