



STATE OF ARKANSAS
ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR

August 20, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I am pleased to support the United States Department of Agriculture's proposed rule on the "Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)." The proposed rule will close an unintended loophole that has been used by some states to define benefits to include non-cash or in-kind benefits from any program funded by the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to extend eligibility for the SNAP program. This loophole allows households with income and asset levels above the national eligibility thresholds to become eligible for SNAP.

The proposed changes in the rule are modest, commonsense approaches to strengthening program integrity in the SNAP program that cost \$65 billion in 2018. They are long overdue. In a July 2012 report to Congress, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) stated that the broad-based eligibility categorical eligibility (BBCE) loophole "has potentially had a negative effect on SNAP program integrity" and that "both national data and discussions (with SNAP caseworkers) ... suggest BBCE may also be associated with more errors."

The proposed rule protects households with the lowest levels of income and assets for whom the SNAP program is intended. I appreciate the opportunity to share these comments on the importance of ensuring the taxpayers the SNAP program will be administered with the highest levels of program integrity.

Sincerely
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson", written over the word "Sincerely".

Asa Hutchinson