

Field Notes: AgriPolicy Brief

Volume 1, Issue 5

December 2025



SNAP Policy Watch

The latest on SNAP. On November 10, through a special session (the second session called this year), both chambers of the New Mexico Legislature and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham approved funding SNAP through the start of next year in the event that the federal government was unable to reach a deal and reopen the government. The decision passed with near-unanimous support in both state chambers: the House voted 52-9, and the Senate voted 30-6. The state will allocate \$162 million total for SNAP funding, utilizing dollars from the Health Care Authority funds and the state's emergency contingency funds. The legislation includes a provision that halts state payments once the federal government reopens and resumes SNAP funding.

As previously reported, on October 29, Governor Lujan Grisham announced that the state would provide \$30 million in state funding from the Health Care Authority funds, intended to help feed New Mexicans through the first 10 days of November.

Since the shutdown began on October 1, at least nine states have replicated New Mexico's response by providing direct financial aid for SNAP at the state level including: Maryland, Louisiana, Vermont, Delaware, Hawaii, Virginia, Rhode Island, the District of Columbia and Arizona.

When will folks get their benefits? In an alleged attempt to root out fraud, USDA will require individuals to reapply for SNAP. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins stated that the administration would require reapplication as USDA had received SNAP data from 29 Republican states where "186,000 deceased men and women and children in this country are receiving a check". In an [interview](#), Rollins stated: "It's going to give us a platform and a trajectory to fundamentally rebuild this program, have everyone reapply for their benefit, make sure that everyone that's taking a taxpayer-funded benefit through SNAP or food stamps, that they literally are vulnerable, and they can't survive without it".

THIS ISSUE INCLUDES UPDATES ON:

- SNAP Recap - Page 1
- Government Shutdown- Page 2
- Appropriations Breakdown- Page 3
- Fix Our Forest Act - Page 4
- NM Food Charter Report Card - 6



SNAP Policy Watch Continued...

Is this accurate? Partially, but improper payments are not a new problem. States are required to recertify households regularly (every six to twelve months, sometimes longer for seniors using SNAP). It is possible that some households slip through the cracks. For instance, if an individual is deceased, or if a child moves households or systems, enrollment might not be determined until the state runs a death match or household reapplies. As a result, the 2018 Farm Bill authorized USDA to direct and maintain a national database, the National Accuracy Clearinghouse (NAC), to identify and prevent duplicate participation across states. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has worked to scale the system nationally, and limit improper payments and improve program integrity.



New Mexico is also strengthening oversight measures. Framing SNAP as dysfunctional is a consistent narrative in the Administration's reform efforts, however, it's something both sides of the aisle agree is critical. A familiar refrain has appeared at the state level with Republican State Senator Crystal Brantley, who represents the 35th district, calling for an expanded audit of SNAP benefits as reports surfaced of illicit exchange of SNAP benefits in Sierra County. You can read Brantley's letter to the State Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) Director [here](#). It is important to note that the legislation passed at the state level required that LFC conduct a program evaluation of the state's administration of SNAP.

Government Reopens: What's in the Deal

Negotiations to reopen the government gained traction. On November 9, the US Senate [voted 60-40](#) to proceed with stopgap funding legislation to reopen the government through January 30, 2026, including three funding bills. With Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Dick Durbin (D-IL), John Fetterman (D-PA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Angus King (I-ME) joining Republicans in voting yes to reopen. On November 12, the House passed the CR and minibus with a mostly party-line vote of 222-209. Reps Thomas Massie (R-KY-04) and Greg Steube (R-FL-17) joined Democrats voting no, while Reps. Henry Cuellar (D-TX-28), Don Davis (D-NC-01), Jared Golden (D-ME-02), Adam Gray (D-CA-13), Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA-03), and Tom Suozzi (D-NY-03) joined Republicans voting yes. The President signed the legislation to end the 43 day shutdown on November 12.



Understanding the package. On November 9, as part of the deal to end the shutdown, the Senate released legislative text for three bills, which would include yearlong funding for: Congressional operations and congressional support agencies; the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the FDA; and programs and benefits for veterans, including Department of Defense construction projects for the 2026 fiscal year. These three bills are a result of bipartisan and bicameral negotiations, and will reverse the Administration's mass firings since the shutdown started. It is important to note that this package would not fund all federal programs.



Court battles continue over SNAP. To recap, before SNAP funding lapsed, USDA announced that no funds would be issued on November 1, and that the contingency fund that has been utilized in at least two previous shutdowns, would not be used to fund SNAP. In response, multiple states filed lawsuits in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Both courts ruled that USDA's action to not fund SNAP were unlawful, and ordered USDA to administer benefits, which the Administration appealed to the Supreme Court to block the order. The Supreme Court granted a temporary order and granted an administrative stay allowing the appeals court additional time to consider the appeal.



Agriculture and FDA Appropriations Breakdown

Agriculture and FDA Appropriations provide \$26.65 billion in total funding. Summary included [here](#). Full text [here](#).

Nutrition Assistance

- Full funding for SNAP, the School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, Summer EBT, as well as the multiyear SNAP contingency fund \$8.2 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), a \$603 million increase over fiscal year 2025.
- Continues full funding for the fruit and vegetable benefits (CVB), which the Administration sought to cut
- \$150 million to replenish contingency fund that was drained during the shutdown to fund WIC
- \$460 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Agricultural Research

- \$1.85 billion for Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- \$1.67 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, which the President's budget sought to cut

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

- \$6.957 billion in total funding for the FDA
- \$9 million to conduct oversight of and regulate cosmetics
- \$2.5 million for diabetes research
- \$5 million for the Neurology Drug Program
- \$2 million for the interagency Tobacco Task Force
- At least \$116 million for the State and Local Food Inspections Program

Rural Housing

- \$1.715 billion for rental assistance—an increase of \$73 million over fiscal year 2025
- An increase of \$284 million over fiscal year 2025 for Section 502 Single Family Direct housing loans

Food Safety

- \$1.215 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
- \$240 million for the McGovern–Dole Food for Education program



Conservation

- \$903 million for conservation programs, specifically for conservation operations, which includes soil and water conservation measures, conservation plant materials centers, and other related activities; watershed and flood prevention operations; and watershed rehabilitation programming.

New World Screwworm

Senator John Cornyn's (R-TX) bill, S, 2543, the *Stop the Screwworms With Active Readiness and Mitigation (SWARM) Act*, passed the Senate as part of the shutdown deal. Cornyn introduced this language as an amendment to the Military Construction/VA appropriations minibus with support from both New Mexico senators. The legislation requires, not later than 30 days after enactment of this act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the New World Screwworm domestic readiness and response initiative of APHIS, with a particular focus on: the report must cover domestic readiness plans, including building production facilities and state and/or industry partnerships, sterile fly production technology and other eradication methods, and analysis of the advantages and challenges of domestic versus international sterile fly production.



A win for forests or a weight on climate progress? On October 21, S. 1462, the *Fix Our Forests Act (FOFA)*, advanced out of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee with a bipartisan vote of 18-5. Senators Adam Schiff (D-CA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tina Smith (D-MN), and Michael Bennet (D-CO) voted no. There is significant bipartisan support for FOFA.

All Republican Senators on committee voted in favor of the bill, and were joined by six Democrats: Ranking Member Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Senators John Fetterman (D-PA), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), and Peter Welch (D-VT).

FOFA was previously introduced in the 118th Congress, passed out of the House, and died in committee in the Senate. In January 2025, the House overwhelmingly passed the Fix our Forests Act by a vote of 279-141. The legislation was introduced by House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04) and Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA-50). In April 2025, FOFA was reintroduced by Sen. John Curtis (R-UT), with cosponsors John Hickenlooper (D-CO), Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Tim Sheehy (R-MT). Differences between the House and Senate bills must still be resolved.

S. 1462 will improve wildfire and forest management activities on National Forest System land, public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and Tribal land and protecting communities in high-risk wildfire zones. The bill provides the following solutions for enhancing wildfire recovery and mitigation strategies:

Title I: Landscape-Scale Restoration

- **Fireshed Management Areas:** Prioritize landscape-scale restoration, utilizing fireshed management areas which designate fire-prone area for targeted restoration
- **Wildfire Intelligence Center:** Establish federal hub for wildfire data sharing, prediction and coordination
- **Fireshed Registry:** Establish fireshed registry available to the public with geospatial data for tracking wildfire and sharing management efforts
- **Emergency Management:** Streamline environmental to fast-track wildfire mitigation projects



Fix Our Forest Act Continued...

Title II: Protecting Communities in Wildland-Urban Interface

- Community Programs: Expands access to grants and research to support wildfire reduction strategies
- Vegetation and Restoration: Supports vegetation and reforestation by promoting fire-safe corridors, hazard tree removal, seed strategies, and nursery development

Title III: Transparency, Technology and Partnerships

- Innovation and Reporting: Promotes biochar innovations for conservation. Enhances federal ability to accurately track hazardous fuel reductions. Allows for the creation of a public-private partnership pilot program to monitor wildfire by satellite
- White Oak Resilience: Launches restoration initiatives for white oak ecosystems and nursery shortages

Title IV: Firefighter Support

- Casualty Assistance: Establishes a program to support wildland firefighters injured or killed in the line of duty.

Several groups have voiced strong opposition to the bill, particularly due to its expansion of categorical exclusions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), reduced public engagement, and potential for increased logging without scientific oversight. The bill would allow the acreage limit for forest projects exempt from full environmental review to be increased, from 3,000 to 10,000 acres. There was significant opposition to the House version passed in January 2025 for this reason. In April 2025, Earthjustice sent [a letter](#) to the Senate expounding concerns with FOIA over damage to forests, biodiversity and climate resilience with 150 organizations signing on, notably: New Mexico Wild, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, Upper Gila Watershed Alliance and Santa Fe Forest Coalition.

On October 20, 2025, the Senate Agriculture Committee received [a letter](#) opposing S. 1462 from the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks with over 100 groups signing on. Notably, New Mexico Wild, Santa Fe Forest Coalition, San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council (regional, but includes NM work), Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, Heart of the Gila, Atowi Project (tribal-led), and Lakeville Friends of the Environment (regional NM advocacy). Signers are concerned that the bill will promote widespread logging, and curtail public and tribal engagement.

2025 New Mexico Food Charter Report Card

On November 1, the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council issued the second annual [New Mexico Food Charter Report Card for 2025](#). The Policy Council's goals focus on advocating for food systems that strengthen agricultural economies in New Mexico, and promote food grown, raised, and processed in New Mexico. Key highlights from the report include: improvements to accessing nutritious food for vulnerable populations, recommendations for prioritizing regenerative farming and clean water access, invest in food infrastructure (e.g. cold storage), impacts of federal and state action and recommendations for future policy ideas including securing funding for programs like SNAP Double Up Food Bucks, the Approved Supplier Program, and the Regional Farm to Food Bank Program, as well as recommendations for federal legislation advocacy, including support for the Strengthening Local Food Security Act and Local Farmers Feeding Our Communities Act to enhance local food systems and support small-scale producers.



Ranching Realities Meet Political Priorities

In mid-October, the Administration announced a new trade deal with four countries in Latin America (Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala and El Salvador). Part of the deal includes the elimination of the 10 percent tariff on Argentinian beef imports, and quadruples the amount of beef imports (an increase from 20,000 metric tons of beef to 80,000 tons). A 25 percent tariff would be triggered once imports reach 80,000 tons (as Congressionally mandated). The deal has not been officially signed, leaving implementation timelines uncertain.

The Administration's trade moves are clashing with rancher priorities. With the U.S. cattle inventory at an all-time low and skyrocketing beef prices, cattle producers should have been poised to benefit from a strong market. However, actions taken by the Administration in an effort to lower costs for consumers may put undue burden on producers. New Mexico produces about 696 million pounds of beef annually, valued at roughly \$1.12 billion, one of the largest markets in the country. Prices have soared as a result of persistent drought, high feed and input costs, and limited herd expansion, shrinking the cattle supply. There are also ongoing discussions about market consolidation contributing to rising prices within the meatpacking industry as four firms (Tyson Foods, JBS USA, Cargill and National Beef Packing Company) control over 80% of U.S. beef processing. It is important to note that Tyson Foods and Cargill [settled a class action lawsuit](#) for \$87.5 million that claimed the processors were fixing prices.

Bipartisan discontent over the deal continues. The current strategy has drawn criticism from American cattle producers and policy makers who argue that the Administration's approach will hurt the U.S. cattle industry. On October 29, 14 House Republicans [sent a letter](#) to Secretary Rollins and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer about their concerns with the Administration's strategy to lower beef prices via increasing imports from Argentina, pointing to a consistent trade imbalance (Argentina only buys \$2 million in U.S. beef, while exporting \$200 million in beef to the U.S.). Members who signed include: Reps. Jason Smith (R-MO-08), Adrian Smith (R-NE-03), Greg Steube (R-FL-17), Beth Van Duyne (R-TX-24), Mike Carey (R-OH-15), Michelle Fischbach (R-MN-07), Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04), Rudy Yakym (R-IN-02), Scott Franklin (R-FL-18), Max Miller (R-OH-07), David Kustoff (R-TN-08), Frank Lucas (R-OK-03), Gregory Murphy (R-NC-03), and Aaron Bean (R-FL-04). On November 3, three members of the New Mexico delegation, including Reps. Teresa Leger Fernández (D-NM-03), Melanie Stansbury (D-NM-01), and Gabe Vasquez (D-NM-02), also [sent a letter](#) to Secretary Rollins and Ambassador Greer regarding the same issue, pointing to industry consolidation in the meatpacking industry.

The deal has sparked outrage among key industry voices. On October 21, the U.S. Cattlemen's Association's [sent a letter](#) to the White House raising alarm that the strategy to expand Argentine beef imports is not an America first solution. Similar concern was raised in [a letter](#) from the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA). Additionally, John Boyd Jr., the founder of the National Black Farmers Association, has also voiced concern about the Administration's actions, particularly their impact on soybean farmers and cattle ranchers.

