

February 24, 2026



Representative Wayne MacDonald, Chair  
House Health, Human Services, and Elderly Affairs Committee  
1 Granite Place, Room 158  
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chairman MacDonald and Honorable Committee Members,

New Hampshire Hunger Solutions appreciates the opportunity to testify in **opposition to HB 1773**. We are a statewide, nonprofit organization that works with all parties to advocate to end food insecurity, improve equitable access to nutritious food, and address the root causes of hunger for all in New Hampshire.

While we support the goal of improving nutrition, HB 1773 creates crushing costs for taxpayers and retailers without actually improving health outcomes.

We urge you to consider the following repercussions:

### **1. Crushing Costs for Retailers and the State**

This bill imposes an immediate fiscal burden on New Hampshire's 1,036 SNAP retailers. National industry data estimates upfront software overhauls for these restrictions cost \$1.6 billion in upfront and ongoing costs. Independent grocers on thin margins will pass these costs to all consumers — a "hidden tax" on every Granite State family. Furthermore, with new federal rules shifting more administrative costs to the state, New Hampshire taxpayers cannot afford the millions required for DHHS to build and maintain a massive "grocery policing" database.

### **2. A Policy That Fails to Improve Health**

Decades of research show that restrictions do not improve dietary intake. Families with limited budgets often have to use their remaining cash for restricted items and use SNAP for other inexpensive, shelf-stable foods. The true barrier isn't choice, but affordability. At an average benefit of just \$5.49 per day, families cannot prioritize fresh produce when it costs significantly more than shelf-stable staples.

### **3. Bureaucratic Incoherence**

The bill relies on arbitrary definitions that create "checkout chaos":

- A Twix bar (containing flour) is allowed “food,” while a Snickers bar (no flour) is a banned “candy bar.”
- A parent could buy Twizzlers but face rejection for a granola bar if it is held together by syrup instead of flour.
- Sugary fruit drinks may be eligible, while zero-calorie flavored waters could be stripped from the cart. This technical incoherence is impossible for retailers to manage, and the technical change could cost upwards of \$8,000 to implement at retailer level.

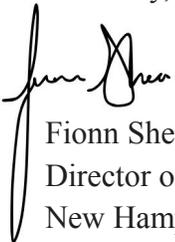
#### 4. Threat to Rural Access and Social Stigma

To avoid technical errors and costly upgrades, many small, rural grocers will raise prices for all or stop accepting SNAP entirely, creating food deserts. Additionally, the stigma of public rejection at the register discourages participation — particularly among older adults, who already face a massive enrollment gap in New Hampshire, where only 32% of those eligible are currently enrolled.

We should invest in what works. Health Incentive Programs (HIPs) such as Double Up Food Bucks and Granite State Market Match empower families to choose fresh, local produce by doubling their buying power. These programs support New Hampshire farmers and retailers – and stimulate our local NH economy – without raising prices or shaming shoppers.

New Hampshire Hunger Solutions strongly urges a vote of **Inexpedient to Legislate on HB 1773-FN**.

Sincerely,



Fionn Shea  
Director of Communications and Grassroots Policy  
New Hampshire Hunger Solutions