Dear Chairmen Harkin and Peterson and Ranking Members Chambliss and Goodlatte:

We the undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for national expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program at the $225 million/year funding level provided in the Senate’s farm bill. While we understand that the Farm Bill is subject to broader agreement, we believe that the level of funding provided in the Senate bill is a necessary and critical step that will pay future dividends in terms of improved child nutrition and health.

As outlined in the Senate bill, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program would be funded at $225 million annually. In total, 4.5 million low-income elementary school children in 5,000 schools nationwide would benefit from receiving a fresh fruit or vegetable snack every day at school. This funding level would provide a base grant to every state that would enable more than 50 schools in every state to participate in the program; with additional funding based on total population. The Senate’s bill also includes funding for an evaluation of the program.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is a valuable nutrition program that results in children eating more fruits and vegetables and creates healthier school food environments. It is an important strategy to improve children’s health and reduce their risk of overweight/obesity and other diet-related health problems. While optimally we would like the program to reach every elementary school child in the nation, we recognize that there are significant constraints on funding in the farm bill and believe that this is a very positive step forward.

We urge the Farm Bill Conferees to support the funding level of $225 million per year as provided in the Senate’s bill to expand the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program nationally.

Very Respectfully,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Cancer Society  
American Public Health Association  
America Walks  
American School Health Association  
Amputee Coalition of America

American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Heart Association  
Association of Schools of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors  
California Food Policy Advocates
United Fresh Produce Association
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
University of North Carolina Asheville, Department of Health and Wellness
U.S. Apple Association
Washington Health Foundation
Washington State Food and Nutrition Council
Washington State Public Health
YMCA of the USA