

Written Testimony
Representative Kim Schrier (WA-08)

Member Day

**Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies**

March 26, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Harris and Ranking Member Bishop, for the opportunity to testify before you today.

As you prepare appropriations for Fiscal Year 2027, I ask that you continue to prioritize the farmers and growers who feed our country and the rest of the world. Over the past year, growers and producers in my district have been forced to navigate a changing and uncertain market, all while input costs continue to rise. Many growers are operating at a loss just to ensure we have food. If we want a reliable food supply chain, we need a strong base.

With that in mind, I request that the committee provide full funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program, or TEFAP, and identify opportunities to increase the supply of TEFAP commodities through domestic food purchasing. TEFAP is invaluable – while the program supports food banks and other emergency feeding organizations, it also provides an additional market for growers to diversify their sales. Amidst changing foreign markets, it is even more imperative that we strengthen domestic market opportunities.

Similarly, I ask the committee to provide \$18 million for the Farm to School Grant Program. This program allows schools to source local foods while providing an avenue for children to

understand our food system. There is no better way to instill a passion for nutrition and agriculture than hands-on learning. This is especially important at a time when we are focusing on improving school nutrition and setting the stage for a lifetime of healthy eating.

Next, I request that the committee support the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to ensure specialty crop growers remain competitive in the global market. These programs support many of the more than 300 crops in Washington State by funding research on pest prevention, irrigation, fungicide resistance, and a variety of other practices that protect crops and orchards and increase the reliability of our food supply chain. I have worked very hard to make sure specialty crop researchers have access to these resources, and I ask the committee to ensure the Secretary of Agriculture can continue to waive the SCRI match requirement for projects of significant value to the industry.

In strengthening our supply chain, we must also support growers where they are. I request that the committee provide \$10 million for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, which offers stress assistance programs to farmers, ranchers, and farm workers. Navigating this farm economy – low commodity prices, increased input costs, and changing markets – takes an immense financial and mental toll. We need to support growers from the ground up to keep our food system strong.

Lastly, I ask the committee to provide \$60 million for School Kitchen Equipment Grants and include language lowering the minimum limit for school equipment from \$5000 to \$1000 to allow schools flexibility to procure equipment they need the most. For new child nutrition rules to be successful, schools need to have the proper infrastructure to implement them. In other words, “eating real food” requires “cooking real food.”

I look forward to working with the committee to advance these priorities. Thank you for your time.