

May 14, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

On behalf of Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), I want to commend you for including SEC. 4205 Healthy Food Financing Initiative in the draft farm bill legislation that the Agriculture Committee considers this week.

The limited and inequitable access to healthy foods in low-income communities in both rural and urban markets is an ongoing problem in the United States. Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) like those in OFN's membership are addressing this market failing using innovative financing solutions to deliver healthy food options to food deserts. A dedicated program like the one you propose would stimulate private investments and create jobs in low-wealth communities, in addition to increasing access to healthy foods to the local population.

Opportunity Finance Network (OFN) is the national network of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)—private financial institutions that are 100 percent dedicated to delivering responsible, affordable lending to help low-income, low-wealth, and other disadvantaged people and communities join the economic mainstream. Through 2011, OFN's Network has originated more than \$30 billion in financing in urban, rural, and Native communities, and financed 940,000 housing units, 83,000 business and microenterprises, 9,000 community facilities, and created or retained 497,000 jobs.

Opportunity Finance Network is encouraging all Members of Congress to support the Healthy Foods Financing Initiative as presented in the Chairwoman's Mark. Thank you for your leadership in the effort to increase access to healthy foods in underserved communities across the country.

For more information on Opportunity Finance Network and its work on the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, please contact Jennifer A. Vasiloff, OFN's Executive Vice President, Policy, (703-967-1338; [jvasiloff@opportunityfinance.net](mailto:jvasiloff@opportunityfinance.net)).

Sincerely,



Mark Pinsky

Cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry