

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3102

August 28, 2024

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Cindy Long  
Deputy Under Secretary, Food and Nutrition  
Services  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Secretary Vilsack and Under Secretary Long:

I am extremely concerned that recent failures by the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are impacting several tribes in my district. Over the past several months, I have heard from Tribal leaders that FDPIR food boxes are arriving late, with spoiled food or not arriving at all. This is unacceptable and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) must restore certainty for these critical food deliveries.

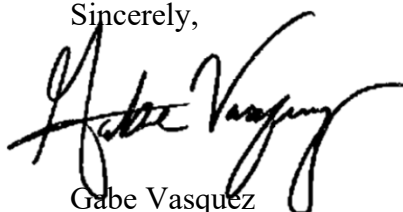
The FDPIR delays have had real impacts on my district. The Pueblo of Acoma, which provides food boxes for 120 households, has been experiencing delays since June. Then, their July food delivery was canceled without notice because the USDA contractor, Paris Brother, Inc., could not fulfill it. Then in August, the Pueblo received their food delivery two weeks late. Throughout these delays, USDA and the Paris Brothers, Inc. were negligent in their communications with the Pueblo, leaving Tribal members without the food their families rely on.

FDPIR is vital to the well-being of Tribal Nations in New Mexico, providing nutritious food to Tribal members. Tribes in New Mexico experience higher rates of hunger and poverty and live in remote areas without grocery stores. FDPIR is a lifeline for my constituents and these delays left more than one hundred families struggling to put food on the table.

I am calling on USDA to investigate these matters and promptly implement corrective measures to ensure that food deliveries are timely and meet the highest quality standards. I also urge you to work with the Tribes impacted in New Mexico to find a remedy for their losses and engage in immediate and robust Tribal consultation to ensure FDPIR works for Tribes in New Mexico and across the United States. Indian Country must be able to rely on FDPIR.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response and working together to ensure that Tribal nations in New Mexico receive the food assistance they need.

Sincerely,



Gabe Vasquez  
Member of Congress (NM-02)