New Mexico Should NOT Tax Food

We have better options for raising revenue

New Mexico has the highest childhood food insecurity rate in the nation\(^1\)

26% of our children don’t have access to enough nutritious food

125,200 New Mexico kids are food insecure

That is roughly equivalent to every student in the Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces school districts combined not having reliable access to a sufficient amount of nutritious food.

“In the end, the people who we are going to punish with a tax on food are the ones who don’t have very much and the ones who can least afford it; the ones who have the least are the ones who are going to pay the highest price.”

-NM emergency food service provider\(^3\)

Food is the most basic of human necessities. New Mexico’s leaders should be fighting hunger, not making it worse by taxing food.
The lower your income, the higher the share that is spent on food

Mean income by quintile

Lowest 20%
$11,933
Second 20%
$30,315
Middle 20%
$49,339
Fourth 20%
$77,103
Highest 20%
$149,504

New Mexicans strongly oppose a food tax

In December 2018 New Mexicans were asked if they would support or oppose the following proposals:

Do you support or oppose charging a sales tax on food?

Oppose: 87%  Support: 9%

Do you support or oppose charging a sales tax on food but lowering the sales tax on other goods?

Oppose: 80%  Support: 16%
SNAP benefits are not adequate to address food insecurity

22\% of New Mexicans who are poor enough for SNAP don’t receive it\textsuperscript{7}

and they spend over $200 million a year on groceries\textsuperscript{8}

80\% of SNAP benefits are used up within the first half of the month\textsuperscript{9}

Exhaustion of SNAP benefits at the end of the month decreases test scores, and increases hospitalization rates and disciplinary action for kids.\textsuperscript{10}
New Mexicans with low food security must make tradeoffs in order to get by:

- **75%** Purchase inexpensive, unhealthy food in order to have at least some food at home to eat
- **61%** Choose between paying utilities or buying food
- **59%** Choose between paying for medicine or medical care or buying food
- **48%** Choose between paying their rent or mortgage or buying food

"$25 doesn't seem like a lot until you don't have a dollar to your name. Then, it is like a small fortune."

—Hispanic community member, Albuquerque

New Mexicans earning low incomes miss, on average, **3 meals per week**.