



Making Agricultural Products Locally Essential (MAPLE) Act

Introduced in the Senate by: Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.); Susan Collins (R-Maine); Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.); Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.); Angus King (I-Maine); Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)

Introduced in the House by: Representatives Nick Langworthy (R-NY-23); Joe Courtney (D-CT-02)

Background:

[A 2022 report](#) found that overconsumption of sugar can lead to a range of health issues including obesity, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and other metabolic disorders. The impact of overconsuming sugar is generally considered to be even higher in senior adults compared to younger people. Maple syrup, a naturally occurring sweetener, [provides a healthier alternative](#) to refined sugars for its mineral content, such as potassium, calcium, zinc, and manganese.

The Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) aims to enhance the diets of low-income seniors by providing them with coupons to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey from approved farmers markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. The program also promotes the consumption of local foods and the expansion and development of local agriculture markets. The SFMNP is vital to helping seniors prevent and treat health problems associated with sugar consumption.

Legislation:

The *MAPLE Act* would add maple syrup to the eligible products that seniors can purchase under the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program. By expanding the SNFMP, more seniors will have access to a healthier alternative to refined sugars, aligning with the program's mission to promote healthy eating habits among seniors.

Moreover, expanding the SFMNP to include maple products offers vital support to small-scale maple producers, many of whom are family-owned operations in rural communities. By diversifying the range of eligible products to include maple products, the SFMNP can further enhance access to nutritious foods while fostering economic growth within the maple industry.

Supporting Organizations:

The *MAPLE Act* is endorsed by the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association, the New York Farm Bureau, and the New York State Maple Producers Association.