

EXHIBIT 7

**DECLARATION OF CHRISTOPHER LONG, DIRECTOR,
COLUMBUS DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

I, Christopher Long, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of 18 and competent to testify to the facts contained in this Declaration. I am the Director of the Columbus Department of Finance and Management.

2. I have served as the Director of the Columbus Department of Finance and Management since 2025.

3. The Columbus Department of Finance and Management has a staff of over 300 employees responsible for the development and administration of the City of Columbus's operating budget and capital budgets. The Department is further tasked with facilitating, crafting, and monitoring of the City's fleet, facilities maintenance, procurement, and real estate and construction management.

4. In my capacity as Director, I have direct responsibility for overseeing certain parts of the City's operations, services, and budget, and I am familiar with the needs of Columbus residents and the challenges facing our community. In my role, I am responsible for overseeing the City's budget management as well as supervising our multi-year capital improvements program. The facts set forth in this declaration are based on my personal knowledge, information provided to me by City staff in the course of their duties, and review of City records. If called as a witness, I could and would testify competently to the matters stated herein.

I. CITY OF COLUMBUS SERVICES

5. The City of Columbus, Ohio, is a municipal corporation organized under Ohio law. *See* Ohio Const. Art. XVIII. Columbus has all the powers of local self-government and home rule under the constitution and laws of the state of Ohio, which are exercised in the manner prescribed by the Charter of the City of Columbus.

6. Columbus, located in Franklin County, is the capital of Ohio. It is the largest city in the state and the fifteenth largest city in the United States, with a population of 905,748, according to the 2020 Census.

7. Columbus provides a wide range of services on behalf of its residents, including operating the municipal electric, water and sewer services, and covering certain medical expenses for uninsured individuals living in Columbus, providing a sliding scale of no cost and low-cost clinics through the Columbus Public Health Department (CPH). The City also operates low cost and no cost drop-in health clinics and no cost inhalers, Columbus community/recreation centers and their accompanying free early schooling and arts programming, and supports a range of human services needs through a network of community partners such as rental assistance, work force development programs, financial skills programs, and after school childcare programs.

II. COLUMBUS RESIDENTS RELY ON SNAP BENEFITS

8. According to data from the Ohio Jobs and Family Services, approximately 12.8% of households in Columbus receive SNAP benefits. These benefits are crucial to preventing hunger and supporting food security among the

City's residents. Franklin County has 173,523 SNAP beneficiaries obtaining approximately \$31 million per month in benefits and Columbus City Schools estimates that approximately 29,000 students receive SNAP benefits.

9. For many of these households, SNAP benefits constitute the primary or sole means by which they can afford to purchase food. These benefits are typically loaded onto Electronic Benefits Transfer ("EBT") cards at the beginning of each month, and families plan their food budgets around the availability of these benefits.

10. Many of our City's residents live paycheck to paycheck with minimal savings or financial cushion. They depend on the timely and predictable issuance of their SNAP benefits to feed themselves and their families.

III. IMPACT OF SNAP BENEFIT SUSPENSION ON COLUMBUS

11. This week, with SNAP benefits set to run out, the Columbus City Council has been forced to allocate \$25,000 in emergency funding for the area's largest food bank collective. The Administration is also working on an emergency response plan, which includes coordinating with other local governmental units, local non-profits and for-profit corporations to further address issues of food insecurity as a result of this loss of benefits. The City also expects to provide additional funding in support of individuals who have had their SNAP benefits cancelled. Although a finalized dollar amount has not yet been established, the City will be using its limited financial resources to support individuals who are facing food insecurity issues.

12. On October 10, 2025, USDA issued a letter to all State SNAP agencies directing them to “hold their November issuance files and delay transmission to State EBT vendors until further notice.”

13. On October 24, 2025, USDA issued a memo formally suspending SNAP benefits.

14. As a result, SNAP benefits will not be issued beginning November 1, 2025, to approximately 1.5 million Ohioans—including 173,523 Franklin County residents.

15. As a municipality, Columbus provides essential services and programs to support our residents, including public safety, public health, education, recreation, refuse collection, housing, and various social services designed to help individuals and families achieve stability and self-sufficiency. The City operates and funds early schooling, arts programming, community centers, and public health initiatives that serve thousands of Columbus residents each year. The City and many of its employees have been forced to step away from their normal duties to work with our non-profit partners and others in the community to make sure that we have the necessary resources available to our residents for them to coordinate and gather resources to community residents while SNAP benefits are unavailable.

16. Columbus also partners with and provides funding to local nonprofit organizations and food pantries that provide emergency food assistance and other support services to residents, including Mid-Ohio Food Collective, Childrens Hunger Alliance, LifeCare Alliance, and other partners such as the Columbus City Schools.

17. The City's ability to provide these services depends on careful planning and allocation of limited municipal resources. Columbus operates with a constrained budget, and any significant increase in demand for City services or need to divert resources to address emergency situations creates substantial strain on our operations and impairs our ability to serve our residents effectively. With SNAP benefits set to run out in a few short days, Columbus has already been forced to deploy emergency funding that was not originally budgeted for. The City of Columbus operates under a balanced budget, and its financial resources are not unlimited. Therefore, the need to redirect funding for emergency needs carries with it certain opportunity costs. These costs come in the form of forgoing other investments central to maintaining core city services.

18. The suspension of SNAP benefits will have immediate and severe consequences for Columbus and its residents. Many households in the City rely on SNAP as their primary source of food assistance. When those benefits are suspended, the burden of meeting basic nutritional needs falls to local government and nonprofit service providers that already operate at capacity.

19. The City's community partners—including local food pantries—have reported an increase in residents seeking emergency food assistance since the federal government shutdown began in early October. If November SNAP benefits are not issued, the City anticipates a surge in food insecurity and hunger that will far exceed available resources.

20. Columbus expects to experience a dramatic and unprecedented increase in demand for City services and programs as a result of the SNAP suspension. Residents who suddenly lose their primary means of purchasing food will turn to City resources, community centers, local food pantries, and other emergency assistance programs.

21. The emergency \$25,000 allocated by the City Council is not sufficient to address a massive and sustained increase in food demand in the City. Community partners, including the Human Services Chamber, a conglomeration of local non-profits, have told the City that existing issues will only get worse than they are now if SNAP benefits are not issued.

22. The City anticipates that as residents are forced to find alternatives to their SNAP benefits, they will redirect their money away from core needs, such as housing, transportation, and other expenses into money needed for food. This may result in these residents not having sufficient resources to pay for their housing, transportation, or health needs.

23. We also anticipate that the City will face additional financial burdens, including higher strain on the Columbus Emergency Medical Services system and the public health department as residents will be forced to skip paying their insurance premiums to buy food. As individuals living in Columbus that do not have health insurance do not receive a bill for emergency ambulance transport, that cost will be passed on to the City. Additionally, as more folks are forced to skip insurance premium payments, they will get pushed to seek care from Columbus Public Health

Department clinics that serve as providers of last resort. City services will become increasingly overburdened at a time when there is less money than usual to bolster their programs.

24. Additionally, we expect to see reduced economic activity in Columbus, as \$1.50 of economic activity is generated by every \$1 in SNAP benefits spent.

25. Columbus will also face higher costs related to emergency services, including increased demand on its public school system (as more children arrive hungry or without adequate meals), health programs, and after-school programming. The City anticipates that there will be an increased demand for rental and utility assistance as SNAP benefits are no longer available. In addition, because of the widespread use of school breakfast and lunch programs, the City anticipates that malnutrition will become a health issue that will need to be addressed due to missed meals at home because of a lack of SNAP benefits. Further, this will cause other problems as this leads to loss of educational opportunities due to malnutrition and lack of concentration.

26. Although we understand that Columbus community members and local philanthropic organizations are stepping up to donate to food banks and food pantries in this time of need, we have no expectation that donations will close the gap that SNAP benefits typically provide. Even if we saw exponential growth in charitable support, it would not replace the essential role that SNAP benefits play in ensuring food security for Columbus residents. SNAP benefits are approximately \$31 million

per month for 173,523 recipients. Local government and local partners simply cannot make up that shortfall.

27. The SNAP suspension undermines the City's ability to meet its legal and moral obligations to safeguard the welfare of its residents. The harm to Columbus will continue to worsen each day that SNAP benefits remain suspended. These diversions of staff time and financial resources impair the City's ability to carry out its regular municipal functions and thus frustrate our mission of serving and supporting our residents. We cannot sustain this level of emergency response without devastating consequences for our City government and the community we serve.

**IV. HARM TO COLUMBUS AND OUR CITIZENS ABSENT A TRO
WOULD BE IRREPARABLE**

28. The effect of the SNAP suspension poses an existential challenge to the City's capacity to serve its residents. Columbus operates with a balanced budget and limited financial resources. The additional burdens caused by these federal actions will require the City to divert money and personnel away from essential municipal services, impairing its ability to function effectively. Already, \$25,000 have been diverted to address the upcoming SNAP suspension. We continue to work closely with our local for profit and nonprofit partners to further address this shortfall and expect the City to respond with additional resources. However, the city is not able divert an additional \$1 million each day to make up for the loss of SNAP benefits. Each day that SNAP benefits remain suspended more families will go hungry and poverty in Columbus will deepen.

29. Municipal budgeting requires the city to plan based upon its population and its reasonable expectation that programs that have existed for decades continue. Prior to November 1, 2025, Columbus budgeted based upon its reasonable belief that SNAP benefits would be available to its residents. Because of this cutoff, Columbus has had to turn on a dime and immediately determine how to reallocate funds to support residents who may desperately need assistance.

30. The harm is not merely financial. Columbus's relationship with our residents, the City's capacity to provide essential services, our public health and safety systems, and our ability to plan and operate effectively are all being damaged in ways that cannot be quantified or compensated after the fact.

31. Similarly, the disruption to the City's educational, workforce development, and other programs caused by the need to divert resources to emergency food response would cause irreparable harm to the individuals and families who depend on those programs. A similar hardship is suffered directly by the City itself in that it must redirect the efforts of its employees in order to react to this crisis. Those same employees will face extra responsibilities at health clinics, after school programs, rental assistance, and other city services. Delays in education, job training, and support services can have lasting consequences that cannot be remedied later.

32. The City has already been forced to divert some resources and planning as a result of the federal governmental shutdown. With the additional loss of SNAP

benefits, that uncertainty has been compounded and made even more difficult for the City to plan and attempt to address.

33. The uncertainty and crisis atmosphere created by the SNAP suspension also harm the City's ability to plan effectively for our programs and services.


34. Children in Columbus will suffer irreparable developmental, educational, and health consequences from food insecurity that cannot be remedied by later restoration of SNAP benefits. The harm of going hungry during critical developmental periods cannot be undone.

35. A temporary restraining order requiring USDA to immediately release November SNAP benefits would directly remedy the harms to Columbus. SNAP recipients would receive their benefits, reducing the demand on City services to sustainable levels and allowing the City to continue normal operations and provide our full range of municipal programs and services to residents.

36. Without such relief, the harm to Columbus will be immediate and worsen each day. The longer the SNAP suspension continues, the more difficult it will be for the City to recover and restore our operations to normal functioning.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on October 29, 2025.

Signed by:

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Christopher Long
Director of the Columbus Department of Finance and Management