

The country has been in an economic kerfuffle after their President Omar Hassan al-Bashir was removed from office in April. The dismissal led to a domino effect of protests, increased food prices, and a cash crisis. An article in *The New York Times* cited the UN in saying, “because of the fragile economy, about 9.3 million of the 43 million people require humanitarian assistance in 2020.”

There has been no reported explanation as to why the lions were never fed. Despite the lack of information, Osman Salih alerted authorities, and soon after the photos were uploaded, park officials, locals, and others were on the scene with medicine and food for the neglected animals. Despite the death of one of the lions, the other four have been doing well. It was reported that they are responding well to the medication as well as eating all of their food.

The situation is being closely monitored by an animal activist organization Four Paws in Vienna. This organization is attempting to send veterinarians and wildlife experts to care for the lions. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has decided to list African lions as a “vulnerable” species. This essentially means the lions are in a state of ‘check,’ which, as any chess player knows, is not a great place to be. However, this is an opportunity for people to get involved, raise awareness, and make a difference. These animals are not endangered yet. They are not extinct yet. There is still an opportunity to save them. If people choose to ignore this, our Kings of the Cats will join the long list of endangered species.

## Microsoft Announces Carbon Pledge

BY RICHARD MAHLE

Big news has emerged from the tech industry as Microsoft declares their pledge against carbon. Their plan is simple: destroy the number of emissions that they’ve generated from the company’s founding in 1975 by the year 2050. Microsoft’s chief executive, Satya Nadella, stated in an event at the company’s headquarters, “The scientific consensus is clear. The world today is confronted with an urgent carbon crisis. Each of us is going to need to take action, and that includes business.” Part of their plan to go carbon-negative is counting all their emissions from their vehicles to electricity use, building materials, and even to the Xbox. Microsoft’s plan also includes switching to electric cars by 2030, in addition to investing one billion dollars in new technologies that will assist in the reduction of the crisis. Some other tactics the company will be using include reforestation and soil carbon sequestration.

Forbes interviewed James Mulligan (a senior associate with the World Resources Institute’s Food,

Forests, and Water Program) about the difficulty of Microsoft’s proclamation. James speaks on how difficult it would be to achieve this, and how they need more than just one company to be a part of these efforts. He also went into detail on their plan of action, first diving into the variety of methods used to capture carbon. Mr. Mulligan explained that reforestation is the cheapest and easiest thing we can do to assist the environment; however, we need more to reduce the amounts of carbon specifically needed according to the IPCC. The only issue is how much more costly it would be. Soil carbon sequestration, however, has more benefits than just helping to fight climate change. James Mulligan states, “Soil carbon sequestration is a ‘no regrets’ approach in that the practices that can increase soil carbon provide a slew of other benefits for the farmer and the environment. We still have a lot to learn about the potential of soil carbon as a large-scale climate solution, and we should be advancing that effort through large-scale research and innovation.”

Microsoft is not the only company fighting its emissions. Amazon even seems to be competing with Microsoft due to a quote from Microsoft’s President Brad Smith, “They said they’ll be carbon-neutral by 2040. We’ve said we’ll be carbon-negative by 2030. They’ve said they’ll have 100 percent renewable energy for their data centers by 2030. We’ve said we’ll do that by 2025.” Apple has also been reducing emissions, stating that 21 of its manufacturers are switching their electricity to renewable sources. Google claims it has been carbon neutral for 12 years.

## 376,000 Minnesotans Go Hungry How President Trump’s Food Stamp Cuts Will Affect Americans and Minnesotans

BY ALEXANDRIA GOSEN

On December 4, 2019, President Donald J. Trump announced the changes he intends to make in regards to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. The changes being made are primarily huge financial cuts to the program. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) published a press release on their website in regards to the cut, commenting about the numbers and statistics from today as opposed to when the program first started:

“With a booming economy that has more jobs than workers to fill them and the lowest unemployment rate in more than 50 years, now is the time for every work-capable Americans to find employment. In fact, the latest U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) figures show the unemployment rate is at 3.6% even though there are 7.0 million job openings. The longer an individual is out of the workforce, the harder it is to re-enter. Now is the time for these individuals to enter, reenter, and remain in the workforce. To put things in perspective, in 2000, the unemployment rate was 4% and the number of Americans receiving

SNAP benefits was just over 17 million. In 2019, during the longest economic expansion in history, the unemployment rate is 3.6% and yet the number of Americans receiving SNAP is over 36 million.”

The final ruling is attempting to encourage work for healthy adults (ages 18-49) without dependents. This rule change will be cutting approximately 4.2 billion dollars over the next five years. However, this rule does not apply to children and their parents, adults 50 years or older, the disabled, or pregnant women.

This directly affects 700,000 people, and Minnesota is no exception to these statistics. In 2019, approximately 376,000 Minnesota residents received assistance from SNAP. The cost to the Minnesota government was approximately 516 million dollars. Hunger advocate and CEO of Second Harvest Heartland (SHH) Allison O’Toole is quoted saying, “What these cuts will do is literally take food off Minnesota Tables. It means more hungry neighbors; more people will need help.” O’Toole’s company provided 97 million meals last year, but SNAP provided nine times as many. SHH will be grossly overwhelmed if they have to pick up what SNAP is leaving behind.

With the first cuts scheduled to go into action in April 2020, Minnesotans are bracing themselves for the worst. On average, SNAP participants received \$127 per month— which can be subdivided to \$1.27 per meal. Many individuals and families relied on these food stamps. One family is reported fearing the worst, as they received food stamps because they’re a one-income family. They are quoted, saying, “Doing anything to SNAP is going to make the poor poorer.”

In response to these protests and cries for help, the USDA merely talks about how relying on the United States government is not a part of the “American Dream.” They say these individuals need to take responsibility and get on their feet. For more information about the changes in place, go to the following website: [fns.usda.gov](https://fns.usda.gov). This features new rules, regulations, and press releases.



Trump's latest cuts affecting food stamps, and MN residents

CREDIT: Victoria Turcios