

February 21, 2013

The Honorable Mark L. Pryor  
Chairman  
Senate Agricultural  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., SD-129

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agricultural  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., SD-190

Dear Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt:

The undersigned organizations support sustained funding for the Food for Peace (PL 480) international food assistance program and strongly oppose proposals to eliminate or drastically reduce program funding or to shift these resources to overseas commodity procurement. Food for Peace has enjoyed strong bipartisan support for nearly 60 years because it works. Our country has the largest and most diverse, reliable, and effective food assistance program in the world.

American agriculture plays a significant role in alleviating world hunger. The Food for Peace program links rural America and the agricultural transportation industries to communities in the developing world that do not produce adequate amounts of food to meet their needs. Growing, manufacturing, bagging, shipping, and transporting nutritious U.S. food under the program creates jobs and economic activity both here at home and in poor countries. Moreover, the program sustains a robust domestic constituency not easily replicated in alternative foreign aid programs.

In addition to fighting global hunger and facilitating developmental programs, the program is one of our most effective, lowest-cost national security tools. Bags of U.S.-grown food bearing the U.S. flag and stamped as “From the American People” serve as ambassadors of our Nation’s goodwill, which can help to address the root causes of instability. We doubt that less reliable foreign-procured food products – whose quality and safety are unknown but paid for by American taxpayers – would have the same impact.

Proposals to slash funding for the program, or to shift to purchases of food aid from foreign (sometimes called “local and regional”) suppliers instead of American farmers would be detrimental to our economy and bad national security policy. We therefore strongly encourage you to support funding for the Food for Peace program, preserving the unique aspects of the program that has made it the world’s most successful, most dependable humanitarian assistance program.

Sincerely yours,

American Peanut Council  
American Soybean Association  
American Feed Industry Association  
California Wheat Commission  
Global Food & Nutrition  
North American Millers' Association  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Potato Council  
National Renderers Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
Southern United States Trade Association  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
US Dry Bean Council  
U.S. Meat Export Federation  
US Rice Producers Association  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
USA Rice Federation  
Washington State Potato Commission  
Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association