

# CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

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## Bipartisan House Members Urge President Obama to Continue Food For Peace Program

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressmen Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Duncan Hunter (R-CA), Chairman of the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, led 28 of their colleagues in sending a letter to President Obama urging him to support U.S. humanitarian food aid, strengthen U.S. farm production, and preserve the U.S.-flagged merchant fleet by maintaining level funding for the Food for Peace program in his fiscal year 2014 budget.

"The purchase of food from U.S. farmers and its subsequent shipment on U.S.-flagged vessels has helped support U.S. farm production and preserve the U.S. merchant marine," the Members wrote. "Reductions in funding for this program – or changes in how it operates – would significantly reduce the amount of U.S. farm products our nation could provide to those in need around the world. It would also threaten our national security preparedness by reducing the domestic sealift capacity on which our U.S. military depends."

Since 1954, the United States has provided vital food aid to the world's poorest communities through the Food for Peace program, which ships U.S. agricultural products on U.S.-flagged merchant vessels to food-insecure nations. For six decades, this critical program has fed millions at risk of starvation and strengthened the capacity of local communities around the world to respond to natural and man-made disasters.

In recent years, there have been significant cuts to the Food for Peace budget. Any additional budget cuts – or changes in the way the program is implemented – would reduce U.S. food aid to vulnerable populations while putting jobs in our agricultural and maritime sectors at risk.

The letter sent by the members is provided below:

April 5, 2013

President Barack Obama

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to affirm our strong support for the continuation in its current form of the "Food for Peace" program created by Public Law 480, and we ask that you maintain level funding for this program in the budget request you present to Congress for the Department of Agriculture for fiscal year 2014.

Since 1954, Food for Peace has enabled the United States to play a leading role in responding to international food assistance needs and ensuring global food security. In recent years, Title II of Food for Peace, which is administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, has become the largest vehicle for U.S. international food aid shipments. Under Title II, U.S. agricultural commodities are shipped to developing countries to provide emergency relief to those facing food shortages and to support broader development objectives. In fiscal year 2011, Food for Peace donated approximately 1.5 million metric tons of U.S.-grown Title II emergency and development food aid to more than 46 million food-insecure people in 48 countries including Kenya, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

Food for Peace is also critical to supporting employment among U.S. farmers and merchant mariners. The purchase of food from U.S. farmers and its subsequent shipment on U.S.-flagged vessels has helped support U.S. farm production and preserve the U.S. merchant marine. Reductions in funding for this program – or changes in how it operates – would significantly reduce the amount of U.S. farm products our nation could provide to those in need around the world. It would also threaten our national security preparedness by reducing the domestic sealift capacity on which our U.S. military depends.

We look forward to working with you to support U.S. farms, U.S. jobs, the U.S.-flagged merchant fleet, and our nation's ability to provide much needed humanitarian and emergency food assistance to the world's least-developed countries by maintaining the Food for Peace Program.

Sincerely,

Elijah E. Cummings  
Duncan Hunter  
John Garamendi  
Nick J. Rahall, II  
Corrine Brown  
Charles W. Boustany, Jr.  
Janice Hahn  
Gary G. Miller  
Linda T. Sánchez  
Michael M. Honda  
Frank A. LoBlundo  
Renee L. Ellmers  
Marcy Kaptur  
David P. Joyce  
Tom Latham  
Alan S. Lowenthal  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Stephen Lee Fincher  
Bob Gibbs  
Michael G. Grimm  
Marcia L. Fudge  
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Don Young  
Richard M. Nolan  
Cedric L. Richmond  
Rick Larsen  
Cheri Bustos  
Kathy Castor  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Sheila Jackson Lee