

March 3, 2016

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Capitol Building, H-305
Washington, D.C. 20515-3801

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Longworth House Office Building, 1016
Washington, D.C. 20515-6157

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Farr:

The undersigned organizations support sustained funding for the Food for Peace (P.L. 480) and Food for Progress international food aid programs and oppose proposals to reduce funding or to shift these resources to overseas commodity procurement and cash assistance. These bedrock food aid programs have enjoyed strong bipartisan support for over 60 years because they share America's agricultural bounty with those who need it most.

Our food aid programs have constantly evolved and improved over the years. They provide well-honed and dependable systems for identifying the appropriate commodities for targeted populations, and for procuring and shipping these commodities through an aid pipeline that is second to none. The transparency, accountability, and reliability of this system are the result of decades of cooperation through a uniquely sustainable public-private partnership among tens of thousands of committed Americans at faith-based and other non-governmental organizations, and in agriculture, labor, industry, and government.

Growing, manufacturing, bagging, and shipping nutritious U.S.-grown food creates jobs and economic activity here at home, provides crucial cargo for our U.S. Merchant Marine, which is essential to our national defense sealift capability, and sustains a robust domestic constituency for these programs not easily replicated in alternative foreign aid programs. Overseas, Food for Peace has an established track record of preventing childhood starvation and providing life-saving tools that families need to work their way out of the most dire poverty. Food for Progress fights hunger by promoting free enterprise in emerging democracies through development of the agricultural sector. Both of those programs are proven methods for tackling food insecurity head-on with concrete results.

In addition to feeding the hungry and facilitating developmental programs to end the cycle of hunger, U.S. food aid programs are also some of our most effective, lowest-cost national security and diplomatic 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. In a time of growing global food insecurity and extremism, these programs need to be expanded, not eliminated or slashed to fund dubious proposals.

We therefore oppose shifting food aid resources to overseas commodity procurement and cash assistance, and strongly encourage sustained funding for Food for Peace and Food for Progress, preserving the unique qualities that have made them the world's most successful, most dependable humanitarian assistance programs.

Sincerely,

American Association of Port Authorities
American Great Lakes Ports Association
American Maritime Congress
American Maritime Officers
American Maritime Officers' Service
American Soybean Association
APL Limited
Central Gulf Lines, Inc.
Euro-America Shipping & Trade, Inc.
Hapag-Lloyd USA, LLC
Intermarine, LLC
International Organization of Masters,
Mates & Pilots
Liberty Maritime Corporation
Maersk Line, Ltd.
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association
Maritime Institute for Research and
Industrial Development
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers
Navy League of the United States
North American Millers' Association
Potomac Maritime, LLC
Potomac Shipping International, LLC
Sailors' Union of the Pacific
Schuyler Line Navigation Company, LLC
Seafarers International Union
Teras Cargo Transport (America), LLC
Transfer Logistics LLC
Transportation Institute
US Dry Bean Council
US Rice Producers Association
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
USA Maritime
USA Rice
Virginia Port Authority
Waterman Steamship Corporation

cc: Members of the Subcommittee