

House Passes Appropriation Measure Supporting Food for Peace

The members of USA Maritime rise in support and gratitude for the House Appropriations Committee's decision to sustain funding for our nation's flagship international food aid programs, despite the Administration's proposal to reduce Food for Peace funding in FY17 by \$116 million.

The Committee Report notes that recent "reforms" to these programs have resulted in dramatic increases in overhead costs, while reducing the amount of funding available to buy life-sustaining U.S. commodities. Furthermore, the Report notes: "The Committee is concerned that no data has shown that the enactment of these reforms has produced increased feeding of beneficiaries and quicker food aid delivery as promised. These reforms have only resulted in decreased support and proposed funding for the program." The Committee also noted that USAID's own Inspector General found that USAID's program distributing cash and vouchers in lieu of U.S. commodities resulted in average delays of three months, with no implementers completing distributions on time, and with less than a third of the promised beneficiaries even reached by the targeted aid. "This data is disturbing and significantly undermines claims of benefits that would be achieved through the farm bill reforms and further changes proposed by the President's budget."

Life-saving Food for Peace and our nation's other in-kind food aid programs are transparent, time-tested, and reliable programs that have done more than any other program in the world to fight the very worst food insecurity across the globe. Bags of US-grown food bearing the US 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. Additionally, growing, manufacturing, and shipping nutritious US-grown commodities creates jobs and economic activity here at home.

In a time of growing global food insecurity and extremism, these programs need to be expanded, not eliminated or slashed to fund dubious proposals.

About USA Maritime

USA Maritime is a coalition of American ship operators, maritime labor organizations, and maritime trade associations committed to protecting our national security through a public-private partnership that features the US Merchant Marine. During times of war, natural disaster, and famine around the globe, the US Merchant Marine is always there, safely and cost-effectively delivering essential equipment and supplies, as well as needed food to hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. For more information: www.usamaritime.org.