

August 5, 2020

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128 Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128 Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307 Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307 Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger:

We thank the Appropriations Committee for more than sixty years of bipartisan support for U.S. international food aid programs, including P.L. 480 Title II (Food for Peace), Food for Progress, and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education within the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Our nation and the rest of the world are facing exceptional and unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Food for Peace provides vital commodities to hungry people and poor countries, and is a visible sign of America's commitment to help the needy and stabilize risk-prone areas. The U.S.-flag maritime industry is proud to be part of this effort and to serve the national security needs of our nation. Our participation in P.L. 480 helps ensure that the U.S. has the privately owned and operated merchant ships and the skilled civilian American merchant mariners it needs to provide strategic sealift and other military support services in defense emergencies.

Commodities grown by American farmers and donated to those most in need through the P.L. 480 program provide an essential source of cargo necessary for the sustainment of the U.S.-flag merchant marine through our nation's cargo preference laws. These programs also provide support to American farmers facing significant disruptions during the pandemic. The undersigned organizations therefore respectfully request that \$1 billion be included in any COVID supplemental funding, endorsing the request by the program's agricultural stakeholders in the attached letter. The undersigned also wish to express their gratitude for the increases to these programs included in H.R. 7610.

These programs are unique among foreign aid programs. The straightforward delivery of American food to the hungry fills a clear, immediate, and growing need overseas, while providing much-needed jobs and stimulus to our mariners, dockworkers, and farmers here at home in this time of economic uncertainty. We again thank you for over sixty years of support for the Food for Peace, Food for Progress, and McGovern-Dole programs.

Respectfully submitted,

American Maritime Congress  
American Maritime Officers  
American Maritime Officers Service  
American President Lines LLC  
Bold Ocean  
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots  
Keystone Shipping Company  
Liberty Maritime Corporation  
Marine Engineers Beneficial Association  
Maritime Institute for Research and Industrial Development  
Sailors' Union of the Pacific  
Seafarers International Union  
Transportation Institute  
U.S. Ocean, LLC  
U.S. Shipping, Inc.