

February 21, 2013

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

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

Under both programs, there are well-honed and dependable systems for identifying the appropriate commodities for targeted populations and for procuring and shipping these commodities. These systems include prepositioning food where emergencies are most likely to occur and diverting cargoes on the high seas when an urgent need arises. The transparency, accountability, and reliability of this system are the result of decades of cooperation through a uniquely sustainable public-private partnership among thousands of committed Americans at faith-based and other non-governmental organizations, and in agriculture, labor, industry, and government.

Growing, manufacturing, bagging, shipping, and transporting nutritious U.S. food creates jobs and economic activity here at home, provides support for our U.S. Merchant Marine, 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 a strong track record of reducing child malnutrition and increasing incomes and food supplies for very poor and vulnerable populations. Food for Progress expands business and income opportunities along the agriculture value chain and improves the quality and quantity of food supplies. Both of those programs are proven models for addressing global food insecurity.

In addition to fighting global hunger and facilitating developmental programs to end the cycle of hunger, these programs are also some 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. In a time of growing global food insecurity and extremism, these programs need to be expanded, not eliminated.

We therefore oppose shifting resources to overseas commodity procurement and strongly encourage you to sustain funding for the Food for Peace and Food for Progress programs, preserving the unique aspects of these programs that have made them the world's most successful, most dependable humanitarian assistance programs.

Sincerely yours,

ACDI/VOCA
Adventist Development & Relief Agency
International
Alliance for Global Food Security
America Cargo Transport Corp.
American Feed Industry Association
American Maritime Congress
American Maritime Officers
American Maritime Officers' Service
American Peanut Council
American Soybean Association
APL Limited
BKA Logistics LLC
California Wheat Commission
Central Gulf Lines, Inc.
Congressional Hunger Center
Counterpart International
Feed the Children
Food for the Hungry
Global Food & Nutrition
Hapag-Lloyd USA, LLC
International Organization of Masters,
Mates & Pilots
International Partnership for Human
Development
International Relief & Development
International Services Corporation
Joint Aid Management USA
Lake Charles Harbor and Terminal District
Land O'Lakes
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 Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Potato Council
National Renderers Association
National Sorghum Producers
North American Millers' Association

OIC International
Pacific Cargoes Incorporated
PCI
Planet Aid, Inc.
Sailors' Union of the Pacific
Salesian Missions
Seafarers International Union
Sealift, Inc.
Southern United States Trade Association
TechnoServe, Inc.
Transportation Institute
United Maritime Group, LLC
United Methodist Committee on Relief
US Dry Bean Council
U.S. Grains Council
U.S. Meat Export Federation
U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development
Council
US Rice Producers Association
U.S. Wheat Associates
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
USA Maritime
USA Rice Federation
Washington State Potato Commission
Waterman Steamship Corporation
Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association
Winrock International
World Vision