

June 30, 2025

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Hoeven and Ranking Member Shaheen:

We would like to express our greatest support for including language to transfer our flagship international food aid program Food for Peace to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the FY26 agriculture spending bill. The undersigned organizations represent U.S. agriculture, maritime shipping, and labor union organizations, and are one of the broadest coalitions of American stakeholders for international food assistance programs. In particular, we are all long-time participants in and strong supporters of the P.L.480 Food for Peace program. Given the current opportunity to restructure the program, we believe that the best home for Food for Peace is with USDA.

At its core, the Food for Peace program is an America First trade policy. It supports substantial purchases from American farmers and millers that are shipped overseas in U.S.-flag vessels, creating value across the agricultural supply chain and strengthening our U.S. Merchant Marine. Moreover, sending American food to countries around the world builds consumer preferences for the products we produce best. This builds long-term commercial trade opportunities, turning humanitarian donations into some of our strongest commercial agricultural export markets. Food for Peace similarly offers critical support for the existing U.S.-flag vessel fleet and American union workers that move cargo, load, and crew the ships that transport our commodities across the globe.

For years, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has ignored the explicit concerns of American farmers, mariners, longshoremen, and other American constituencies who have sought an efficient and effective delivery of food assistance that puts American interests first. USAID has diverted Food for Peace away from simply delivering American food on American ships to starving people and has operated competing missions that are detrimental to American stakeholders. Under USAID management, only about 30 percent of the Food for Peace program budget went toward American food purchases and less than 8 percent of the budget is used for shipping U.S. commodities on U.S. ships. Entrenched philosophies have repeatedly attempted to cut out American grown food and American ships entirely from our international food assistance programs. Even with the much-needed changes to USAID under the Department of State, we firmly believe the only successful pathway to an America First Food for Peace program is under the management of USDA.

USDA is perfectly positioned to take on this lifesaving program in the interest of American citizens. USDA is purpose-built to serve the farmers that grow the food that feeds our country and the world, including through the Food for Peace program. No agency better understands America's essential role in global food production, with a critical contingent of Foreign Agricultural Service officers around the world. USDA already conducts the food procurement process for Food for Peace and has historically managed the entire program under Title I of P.L. 480, in addition to fully operating its two key food assistance programs: Food for Progress and McGovern-Dole Food for Education. USDA also has a positive track record of putting its cargoes on U.S. ships instead of our

foreign-flag competitors. It is time to bring America's international food assistance programs back in line with their most direct domestic stakeholders: the American farmers, millers, and mariners, ensuring it advances American interests at home and abroad.

As mentioned, Food for Peace is a program with a multitude of benefits to America's farmers, millers, mariners, and people across the globe facing famine emergencies. With U.S.-grown food, American flagged vessels, crewed by Americans, the donated commodities proudly display "From the American People" on each of its packages. Food for Peace is the one and only baseline for foreign aid that puts America First while also helping those on the brink of starvation. There is no better home than USDA for this agriculture-appropriated, farm bill-authorized program, to rebuild and restore Food for Peace in a way that is more effective and efficient, allowing it to feed more hungry people across the world.

Sadly, there is no shortage of global hunger. Now is the time to ensure that Food for Peace can reach as many people as possible, which it will do if operated by USDA. We urge you to include language to transfer Food for Peace to USDA in the FY26 agriculture spending bill. Thank you for your consideration and partnership in saving this critical program.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO Maritime Trades Department  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Maritime Congress  
American Maritime Officers  
American Maritime Officers Service  
American Soybean Association  
APL  
Bunge  
California Wheat Commission  
Colorado Association of Wheat Growers  
Didion Milling, Inc  
DRY BULK AMERICA LLC  
Grain Millers  
Heartland Goodwill Enterprises  
Hopkinsville Milling Company  
Idaho Grain Producers Association  
Idaho Wheat Commission  
ILWU Washington Area District Council  
Inland Cape Fine Grind LLC  
International Dairy Foods Association  
International Organization of Masters, Mates &  
Pilots  
Kansas Association of Wheat Growers  
Kansas Farm Bureau  
Kansas Sorghum Producers  
Kansas Wheat Commission

Liberty Maritime Corporation  
LifeLine Foods  
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association  
Marine Firemen's Union  
Maritime Institute for Research and Industrial  
Development  
Midwest Dry Bean Coalition  
Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers  
National Association of Waterfront Employers  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Shipping of America  
National Sorghum Producers  
Nebraska Dry Pea and Lentil Commission  
Nebraska Wheat Board  
Nebraska Wheat Growers Association  
North American Millers' Association  
North Dakota Grain Growers Association  
North Dakota Wheat Commission  
Northeast Chartering Group, LLC  
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association  
Oregon Wheat Growers League  
Pacific Northwest Waterways Association  
Port of Lake Charles

REPCO

Sailors' Union of the Pacific

Seafarers International Union

SeaTac Packaging

SEMO Milling LLC

Texas Wheat Producers Association

Tiger Soy LLC

Transportation Institute

TVS, Inc

U.S. Dairy Export Council

U.S. Peanut Federation

U.S. Wheat Associates

UNISHIPPING SAS

US Dry Bean Council

USA Rice

Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Wyoming Wheat Growers Association

Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission