

October 22, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Agriculture Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture Committee
192 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
House Agriculture Committee
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Agriculture Committee
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Stabenow and Lucas and Ranking Members Cochran and Peterson:

As you prepare to go to conference on the 2013 farm bill, we respectfully urge you to modernize U.S. international food aid by including broadly supported reforms in the trade title (Title III) of the Senate Farm Bill.

Every year, U.S. international food aid programs reach at least 65 million hungry people around the world. These programs play a vital role in preventing famines, reversing acute and chronic child malnutrition, assisting those uprooted by conflict or natural disaster, and enabling vulnerable populations to build resilience against future food price shocks.

Although notable progress has been made over the past several years to improve U.S. food aid programs, it has become increasingly clear that our current system needs more flexibility to achieve maximum impact in responding to complex emergency situations. Moreover, in a time of constrained budgets and increasing needs, more must be done to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our food aid system.

Specifically, we urge you to include the following items in the Farm Bill conference agreement:

- Decrease the reliance upon monetization by providing greater flexibility in funding for non-emergency food assistance programs as proposed in Sections 3001, 3008, and 3201 of the current Senate version of the Farm Bill and by establishing a ceiling, rather than a floor, for funds that may be used to support monetization.
- Support Section 3207 of the Senate bill that makes permanent the authority for local and regional procurement (LRP) projects at USDA at an annual authorized level of \$60 million, with preference given to organizations carrying out programs under the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The 2008 Farm bill authorized a pilot program to implement and study LRP activities in both emergency and non-emergency settings. The results of the LRP pilot showed savings in both money (50 percent savings for unprocessed grain and some pulses) and time (on average an increase of 62 percent in timeliness).
- Support section 3002 of the Senate bill extending the authority from the 2008 Farm Bill allowing USDA and USAID to accelerate the use of products that have proven to be superior in improving nutritional outcomes, and continuing to test new food aid products.

We appreciate your thoughtful leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to support the passage of a Farm Bill that improves U.S. food aid programs to ensure that they meet the humanitarian and development needs of the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Signers:

Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA)
Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL)
Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL)
Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY)
Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL)
Rep. Ted Deutch (D-NY)
Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL)
Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)
Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)
Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-CT)
Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-CA)
Rep. David Scott (D-GA)
Rep. Bobby L. Rush (D-IL)
Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA)
Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA)
Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA)
Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)
Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)
Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL)
Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)
Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA)
Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV)
Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO)
Rep. John Conyers (D-MI)
Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA)
Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ)
Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI)
Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Rep. John Tierney (D-MA)
Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY)
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL)
Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN)
Rep. Lujan Grisham (D-NM)
Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA)
Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA)
Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT)
Rep. André Carson (D-IN)
Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)
Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD)
Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX)
Rep. Terri Sewell (D-AL)
Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-NY)
Rep. William Enyart (D-IL)
Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-FL)
Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX)
Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)
Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA)
Rep. Dana Rorahbacher (R-CA)
Rep. Aaron Schock (R-IL)
Rep. Spencer Bacchus (R-AL)
Rep. Trey Radel (R-FL)
Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI)