

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

February 14, 2025

Ms. Brooke Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

We write with strong concerns about the Administration's recent actions to pause international food assistance programs, including those administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Administration's actions – including a stop work order – halted the delivery and distribution of hundreds of millions of metric tons of U.S. food aid and disrupted critical program operations. While it appears that the Administration has in recent days taken steps to resume some global food aid both at USDA and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), significant questions remain both about the resumption of food aid activities and the long-term future of U.S. food aid.

USDA is responsible for administering the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program. This program uses U.S. commodities, which are purchased by the federal government for use in the school meal programs of developing, food-insecure countries. The McGovern-Dole Program has demonstrated its effectiveness in combating hunger, improving literacy rates, keeping children in school, and ensuring greater stability and security in developing countries. Similarly, USDA's Food for Progress program monetizes U.S. commodities to fund agricultural, economic, and infrastructure development projects.

While we are encouraged to see that the Foreign Agricultural Service has clarified that it is continuing activities for projects funded by the McGovern-Dole Program and the Food for Progress Program, the Administration's stop work order on foreign assistance has needlessly disrupted these programs. We received reports in recent weeks of American-grown commodities sitting in storage without the ability to monitor whether this aid will get to the more than 75,000 children who would have otherwise received school meals. Similarly, with Food for Progress, buyers in other countries have purchased U.S. commodities but have been unable to receive them due to this pause. It is our understanding that this pause encompasses hundreds of thousands of metric tons of U.S. wheat, rice, and soy product. Even with the resumption of these programs, the pause created chaos and uncertainty for the organizations that implement these programs and the people that rely on this food.

USDA is also responsible for procuring commodities for use in the Food for Peace Program, administered by USAID. The sudden nature of the stop work order for the Food for Peace

Program spread confusion and delayed U.S.-grown food like wheat, rice, and sorghum from reaching those facing hunger. Even with the apparent resumption of some Food for Peace programming, implementing partners are uncertain about their ability to pay for the delivery of U.S.-grown commodities.

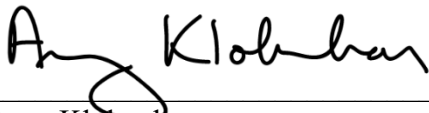
The disruptions to critical international food assistance programs have sown confusion and frustration among the federal government's partners – farmers, millers, longshoremen and sailors, and nonprofits – in implementing these programs. Even with USDA's recent clarification regarding McGovern Dole and Food for Progress, and the rescission of some stop work orders in the Food for Peace Program, many questions remain about the decisions of the last several weeks, as well as the future of American food aid. These are programs that Congress created and for which Congress appropriates money, and it remains unclear that USAID can administer the designated funds given the current situation at USAID. Accordingly, we ask for responses to the following questions by February 28, 2025.

1. President Trump's Executive Order titled "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid" instituted a 90-day pause on foreign assistance and called on all department and agency heads with foreign assistance responsibilities to pause new program obligations and disbursements.
  - a. What has USDA's role been to date in implementing this Executive Order?
  - b. Did USDA receive guidance from the State Department on conducting reviews of foreign assistance under USDA's jurisdiction?
  - c. If so, what criteria has the USDA used in determining whether to continue, modify, or cease its international food assistance programs?
2. USDA partners with USAID in implementing the Food for Peace Program. Has USDA cancelled solicitations for commodities to be used in the Food for Peace Program? If so, please provide the type and amount of commodities.
3. Despite USDA's clarification regarding continuation of activities under McGovern-Dole and Food for Progress and USAID's actions to lift some work orders under Food for Peace, we are aware of significant disruptions to food aid and related programming since the President's pause on foreign aid. Please provide detailed information on:
  - a. Demurrage fees, penalties, or other charges incurred by the implementing partners or the U.S. government due to the pause in food aid;
  - b. Food spoilage, waste, or degradation due to delayed or halted delivery of food aid during the pause in foreign aid.
4. Though USAID has, in theory, allowed for the resumption of programming and delivery of food aid under Food for Peace, the recent turmoil at USAID has resulted in concerns about USAID's ability to resume its responsibilities to administer food aid programming.
  - a. Please describe what, if any, coordination or communications have occurred between USDA and USAID regarding the resumption of activities to ensure that

USAID has the capacity to administer its responsibilities under the Food for Peace Program.

- b. Similarly, please describe what, if any, coordination or communications have occurred between USDA and USAID regarding future FY 2025 food aid programming or commodity procurement.
5. We are concerned about the impact on farmers and US agricultural markets if the USDA does not resume food aid in FY 2025. Please provide a full list of commodities, as well as tonnage and the value of those commodities, purchased by USDA in each of the last five years for the Food for Peace Program, the Food for Progress Program, the McGovern Dole Program, and any additional commodity purchases for international food aid through the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Sincerely,



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Amy Klobuchar  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee  
on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry



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Angie Craig  
Ranking Member, House  
Committee on Agriculture