

**ORGANIZATIONS URGING PASSAGE OF FOOD AID FUNDING
IN THE HOUSE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

May 9, 2008

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Congressman Lewis:

The undersigned organizations strongly support and urge acceptance of the PL 480 Title II food aid funding in the House emergency supplemental bill, \$850 million in FY 2008 and \$395 million for FY 2009. We also support the increased levels for disaster aid and development assistance to respond more fully to the hunger crisis.

Added to the already astonishing levels of hunger and emergencies, export controls, natural disasters and other factors are causing shortfalls worldwide and placing basic foodstuffs out of reach for millions of poor people. Without this critical supplemental funding, food aid programs will be cut back, reducing aid to low-income and food deficit countries, malnourished infants and children, desperately poor families and people affected by crises.

Worldwide, the cost of commodities and shipping have both increased. The resulting costs and shortages have exacerbated poverty and hunger and resulted in destabilization, riots, protests and hoarding in 40-plus developing countries. While the reasons for increased shortages will continue to be debated, one thing is agreed: this is not just a one year aberration and its impact will require more than a one-time increased infusion of food aid.

The hungry populations that are served by Title II already spend a large proportion of their incomes on food and have too little to eat to meet their basic nutritional needs, or are suffering from disasters. Unless the \$850 million additional funding is provided in FY 2008, commodity levels for Title II programs will be reduced by 40-50%. Millions are being dropped from programs or benefits are being severely reduced, setting back efforts to help people overcome hunger. If developmental food aid programs are not restored to their originally-planned levels, malnourished infants and young children who are the main beneficiaries will suffer the most, because the impact of poor nutrition on cognitive and physical growth is most severe in the first few years of life. If Title II emergency and refugee programs do not receive additional funding this fiscal year, aid will have to be withheld from millions of people in dire need.

The bridge funding for food aid in FY 2009 will make it possible to continue to meet originally-planned program levels for the first several months of the fiscal year, although additional emergencies may quickly change that picture. The suddenness and severity of the cyclone in Myanmar is a horrible reminder of how tragedy can hit without any warning.

The Honorable Dave Obey and The Honorable Jerry Lewis

May 9, 2008

Page 2

We are most grateful for the House of Representative's compassionate response to the worldwide hunger crisis. You have our full support and appreciation.

Sincerely,

ACDI/VOCA	Adventist Development & Relief Agency International
Africare	Alliance for Food Aid
America Cargo Transport Corporation	American Farm Bureau Federation
American Maritime Congress	American Maritime Officers
American Maritime Officers Service	American Soybean Association
Breedlove Foods	Catholic Relief Services
Congressional Hunger Center	Counterpart International
Evangelistic International Ministries	Feed The Children, Inc.
FINCA International	Food for the Hungry
Global Container Lines Limited	Global Food & Nutrition Inc.
Idaho Wheat Commission	International Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots
International Relief & Development	Joint Aid Management
Kansas Association of Wheat Growers	Kansas Wheat Commission
Land O'Lakes	Liberty Maritime Corporation
Maersk Line, Limited	Marine Engineers Beneficial Association
Maritime Institute for Research and Industrial Development	National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association	National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union	National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association	National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers	Nebraska Wheat Board
Nebraska Wheat Growers Association	North American Millers' Association
OIC International	Partners for Development
Planet Aid, Inc.	Project Concern International
Sailors Union of the Pacific	Salesian Missions, Inc.
Seafarers International Union	Sealift, Inc.
SUSTAIN	Tosi Maritime Consultants, LLC
Transportation Institute	U.S. Wheat Associates, Inc.
United Maritime Group	United Methodist Committee on Relief
US Dairy Export Council	US Dry Bean Council
US Rice Producers Association	USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice Federation	Winrock International
World Learning	World Vision
Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission	

cc: The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
The Honorable Jack Kingston