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JOINT HEARING BETWEEN

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE
&
HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
LIVESTOCK AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE

HEARING ON U.S. INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID PROGRAMS:
TRANSPORTATION PERSPECTIVES

NOVEMBER 17, 2015

Good morning Chairmen Hunter and Rouzer, Ranking Members Garamendi and Costa, and members of both subcommittees.

On behalf of the Seafarers International Union, the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots and the American Maritime Officers, I thank you for conducting this hearing and for giving me the opportunity to testify. I would also be remiss if I did not thank all of you for your continued support of the U.S. Merchant Marine and our international Food Aid programs.

That we are here today to discuss these issues is a testament to your willingness to include all the relevant stakeholders in America's Food Aid programs. That alone is a heartening step as all too often, discussions regarding our international foreign assistance and Food Aid programs find the maritime industry largely ignored. When we are not ignored, we often find our contributions and concerns discussed by and trivialized by the legions of academics and lobbyists who know little and understand less about the maritime industry, and have made ending in-kind Food Aid and Cargo Preference their top legislative priority.

This would be a disastrous mistake, not only for our industry and the men and women who put themselves in harm's way as members of the American Merchant Marine, but for the United States and the American taxpayer collectively.

The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 codified what was long-standing American policy – that it was necessary for the national defense and the development of domestic and foreign commerce for the United States to maintain a merchant marine.¹ For a variety of reasons, Congress has made the determination that an American merchant marine, crewed by American civilian mariners, made up of American-flag ships, is critical to our nation. The issue that Congress has been confronting since our independence – how best

¹ See Merchant Marine Act of 1946, 46 U.S.C. § 50101 (2015).

to foster our internationally sailing deep water merchant marine – is not a new one. During the debate on a number of merchant marine related bills in 1904, Congressman Edward De V. Morrell of Pennsylvania said,

“It is admitted on all sides that our merchant marine in the foreign trade is languishing. It is admitted that unless some remedy for present conditions is devised before long it will practically be swept from the seas. It is admitted that we are confronted with a great national calamity, threatened by an irreparable loss; but we stand here, year after year, disputing about methods ... [l]ike the ass in the old fable, we are standing between two bundles of hay and yet perishing of hunger by reason of our inability to decide which bundle we shall choose; undecided because one bundle might possibly be better than the other, and because we are too mulish to investigate both before selecting either.”²

The debate Congress had in 1904 over how best to protect and preserve our merchant marine could be the same debate we are having today. Fortunately, Congress in 1904 began the process of developing federal programs to preserve, protect and expand our merchant marine. Since 1904, Congress has developed a number of programs that provide the necessary economic base to support a U.S.-Flag merchant fleet in the foreign trades. Today, those laws include the Maritime Security Fleet Program (MSP)³ and the various Cargo Preference laws that, all working together, support the U.S.-Flag international fleet.

In 1904, Congress passed the first Cargo Preference statute, the Military Cargo Preference Act of 1904.⁴ Future Congresses would pass the Cargo Preference Act of 1954⁵, and a variety of other legislation that ensured that U.S.-Flag ships with American crews would carry a substantial portion of all the cargo bought and shipped using taxpayer dollars. This government impelled cargo is critical to ensuring the continued existence – not success, but simply the continued existence – of a U.S.-Flag fleet sailing in the international trades.

In 1996, Congress passed the Maritime Security Act of 1996, which created the MSP Fleet. The MSP Fleet is a privately owned, internationally trading fleet of U.S.-Flag vessels, that are both militarily useful and commercially viable. MSP represents the backbone of the U.S.-Flag international fleet, and the readiness stipend provided to vessel owners and operators helps to off-set the higher costs required to keep a ship under the U.S.-Flag. MSP eligible ships must meet Department of Defense requirements for military usefulness, must be commercial viable as determined by the Department of Transportation’s Maritime Administration (MARAD), must be American owned, American crewed and American flagged.⁶

² 38 CONG. REC. 6131 (daily ed. Apr. 30, 1904) (statement of Rep. Morell).

³ 46 U.S.C. §§ 53101–53111 (2015).

⁴ 10 U.S.C. § 2631 (2015).

⁵ 46 U.S.C. § 55305 (2015).

⁶ *See generally* U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSP., MAR. ADMIN., THE MARITIME SECURITY PROGRAM: MEETING NATIONAL SEALIFT NEEDS, (2015).

Together, MSP and Cargo Preference work to ensure the continued existence of the United States Merchant Marine. MSP provides the ships, and Cargo Preference provides the cargo necessary to keep those ships economically viable. A ship without cargo is like a car without an engine – not moving.

Amidst all of the discussion about ships and cargo, it is easy to forget (and those who are most critical of Cargo Preference always do) the most important aspect of the American Merchant Marine – what makes the merchant marine fundamentally American – the men and women who crew these vessels.

These men and women, some of the most highly trained and skilled mariners in the world, are the heart of our merchant marine. They are the one irreplaceable asset in any discussion of maritime policy. These are the same men and women who willingly brave the dangers of the sea, who sail into combat zones with military cargo, or pirate infested waters with critical, life-saving Food Aid, who helped evacuate Manhattan Island on September 11, 2001, and who provided the critical sealift necessary to support our warfighters in every American conflict from the earliest days of the Revolution to Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Supporting the military has been fundamental to the American Merchant Marine for its entire existence. For example, since 2009, privately-owned U.S.-Flag commercial vessels and their civilian U.S. citizen crews have transported more than 90% of the sustainment cargo needed to support U.S. military operations and rebuilding programs in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁷

Ensuring that we have an adequate mariner pool to crew the privately-owned U.S.-Flag international fleet (both MSP and non-MSP vessels), our government fleets (including the civilians who crew vessels of the Military Sealift Command), and our reserve fleets (including the Ready Reserve Force and the National Defense Reserve Force) has been the fundamental purpose of federal maritime policy in modern times.

Today, that mariner pool is at risk. Our U.S.-Flag international fleet faces one of the toughest economic environments in recent memory, as even now the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is warning of a potential global recession.⁸ Anemic trade growth has placed a significant burden on the maritime industry, and that, coupled with significant reductions in government-impelled cargo, has put increased pressure on the U.S.-Flag international fleet.

(2015).

⁷ *Hearing on the Maritime Administration's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request Before the Subcomm. On Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation of the H. Comm. on Transportation and Infrastructure*, 114th Cong. 2 (2015) (statement of Paul N. Jaenichen, Administrator, Maritime Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation).

⁸ Szu Ping Chan, *World Flirts With Global Recession as Trade Growth Slows, Warns OECD*. THE TELEGRAPH, Nov. 9, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/11983690/global-recession-trade-growth-warns-oecd.html>.

If American ships and the companies that operate them cannot continue to compete internationally, those vessels will leave the U.S.-Flag and the mariners who crew them will be thrown out of work. If too many mariners cannot find steady employment at sea, not only will they leave the industry, they will lose the critical licenses and credentials they must maintain to crew these ships under existing federal and international law.⁹

If we lose these jobs, these mariners will go away, and they are not easily replaceable in the event of a national emergency or major conflict. For example, under the International Convention on Standards, Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW), the primary regulation for international and U.S.-Flag mariners, to receive a ship's master endorsement for operating vessels of more than 3,000 gross tons, at a minimum, the applicant must have 1,080 days of service as the officer in charge of the navigational watch (OICNW) on the oceans or Great Lakes.¹⁰ That represents the equivalent of almost three years of twenty-four hour days at sea. It could take a mariner close to a decade to accrue that much sea time in order to qualify. Even entry level mariners require significant training in order to become qualified and competent at sea. The Seafarers International Union's entry-level unlicensed apprentice program is a year-long program designed to take those unfamiliar with the maritime industry and prepare them for a career at sea.¹¹ These are difficult, demanding jobs, but they are jobs that are critical to the national security of the United States. Without American civilian mariners, the United States cannot project power overseas and it cannot go to war. It is the American civilian mariners of the U.S. Merchant Marine who crew all of the vessels – whether privately-owned or government-owned – available to our country in time of crisis.

It is that simple. Our mariners need good, steady jobs in the industry during peacetime in order to ensure that they are available and ready to serve America in wartime. As Rear Admiral Thomas Shannon, the commander of the Military Sealift Command said during this year's National Maritime Day commemoration, "[i]t is our U.S.-flagged merchant fleet and our mariners that ensure that our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines are supplied. From Inchon to Iraq, our mariners and our maritime industry delivered . . . Let us not, as a nation, sign away our remaining sealift capacity to non-U.S.-flagged fleets sailed by non-U.S. mariners."¹²

As noted before, under the Cargo Preference Act of 1954, at least 50% of all cargoes

⁹ See generally 46 C.F.R. 11.102 (2015) (incorporating by reference the International Convention on Standards, Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers of 1978 as amended 1995, and the Standards, Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping Code).

¹⁰ See *id.*

¹¹ The Seafarers Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship, <http://www.seafarers.org/jobs/ua.html> (last visited November 12, 2015). As noted on the website, entry level mariners are sent through five phases of training, each phase taking between two to three months, with the final phase requiring an unspecified amount of time to upgrade skills consistent with the needs of SIU contracted employers. At a minimum, each entry level mariner will spend at least thirteen months in training to successfully complete the unlicensed apprenticeship program.

¹² Marshall Ainley, et al., *Maritime Labor Supports Maritime Security Program and Crude Export Legislation*, THE HILL, Oct. 8, 2015, <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/labor/256420-maritime-labor-supports-maritime-security-program-and-crude-export>

shipped by U.S. Government agencies outside the Department of Defense, including foreign Food Aid cargoes, must be carried by U.S.-Flag ships. Since 1954, the men and women of the U.S. Merchant Marine have been in a partnership with the American farmer community in ensuring the success of America's premiere international food assistance program,¹³ the P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace program.¹⁴ Food Aid has long accounted for the largest source of non-defense preference cargo available to the U.S.-Flag international fleet.¹⁵

Food Aid is a critical component to America's strategic sealift program. It is vital that Congress continue its steadfast support for in-kind Food Aid as part of our federal support for the Merchant Marine.

Despite the oftentimes absurd and patently offensive claims of the opponents of the Merchant Marine regarding the importance of Food Aid to the sustainment of the U.S.-Flag fleet,¹⁶ there is ample evidence that recent reductions in Food Aid cargoes has harmed the maritime industry.¹⁷ These reductions, caused both by declining appropriations for the P.L. 480 Program as well as the statutory reduction in the percentage of cargo reserved to American ships from 75% to 50% in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act of 2013 (MAP-21),¹⁸ and other changes wrought by USAID which reduce Food Aid cargoes, have had a significant adverse impact on the America's Merchant Marine.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014¹⁹ required MARAD to prepare a report to Congress on the current and future impacts of reductions in government impelled cargo on the U.S. Merchant Marine as a result of changes to cargo preference requirements, including those made as part of MAP-21 and reductions to P.L. 480. The report, which was transmitted to Congress on April 21, 2015 paints a clear picture – without cargo preference, most of the U.S.-Flag fleet would disappear and the reductions in Food Aid cargoes have had a real, meaningful impact on the decline of the merchant marine.²⁰

Over the last ten years, Food Aid has made up more than half of the preference cargo carried by U.S.-Flag carriers—more than even Department of Defense cargoes.²¹ We have seen a major drop in the amount of Food Aid cargo carried by the U.S.-Fleet, with total cargo amounts dropping 77% from 2000 to 2013. In 1999, 103 American ships

¹³ David Rogers, *A Food Fight Over Aid Program*, POLITICO, Apr. 24, 2013, <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/04/a-food-fight-over-aid-program-090607>.

¹⁴ Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, Pub. L. No. 83-480 (1954) amended by Food for Peace Act of 1966, Pub. L. No. 89-808 (1966).

¹⁵ See U.S. MAR. ADMIN., REPORT FOR CONGRESS ON THE IMPACTS OF REDUCTIONS IN GOVERNMENT IMPELLED CARGO ON THE U.S. MERCHANT MARINE (2015) 2-3. [hereinafter MARAD Impacts Report].

¹⁶ See, e.g., *Reforming Food Aid: Desperate Need to Do Better: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Foreign Affairs*, 114th Cong. 5-6 (2015) (statement of Christopher B. Barrett, Cornell University). [hereinafter Barrett Testimony].

¹⁷ See generally MARAD Impacts Report, *supra* note 15.

¹⁸ Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, Pub. L. No. 112-141 § 100124, 126 Stat. 915 (2012).

¹⁹ Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-76, § 169, 128 Stat. 598 (2014).

²⁰ See generally MARAD Impacts Report, *supra* note 15.

²¹ *Id.*

carried 6,361,000 gross tons of Food Aid cargo, both pre-packaged and bulk. In 2013, the fleet had dropped to 76 ships, carrying only 1,070,000 tons of Food Aid.²² Although some critics have wheeled forward various theories questioning the role of Food Aid cargoes in sustaining the merchant marine,²³ the correlation between the decline of Food Aid tonnage and our fleet is undeniable.

Since 2010, the size of the U.S.-Flag fleet has dropped by 23%, from 99 vessels to 76, and that number is expected to continue to drop.²⁴ The resulting loss of ships represents the loss of approximately 1,000 mariner jobs since 2010 alone.²⁵

As MARAD noted in their report, Food Aid quantities are affected by a variety of factors, including appropriations levels, food prices, emergencies and where they are located, and the differing kinds of commodities carried.²⁶ This makes it exceedingly difficult to predict, with any reliability, what future impacts will be on cargo volumes. That being said, however, it is clear that the current trend of reductions is likely to continue barring some significant natural or man-made disaster that would likely result in an increase in appropriations for Food Aid.

Critics of the merchant marine contend that the cuts in Food Aid over the last few years, coupled with the MAP-21 cuts have not had a significant impact on our maritime industry.²⁷ MARAD has determined the opposite, finding that “carriers who have reflagged or retired ships out of the U.S.-Flag fleet during the last three years have stated that the predominate driver in their decision to remove vessels has been the loss of preference cargoes.” While the largest reductions have been in DOD cargoes,²⁸ it is clear that the reductions in Food Aid have made matters worse.

That is why the on-going attacks on the merchant marine by those in the so-called “Food Aid Reform” community are so unfortunate. By willfully distorting the role the maritime and agriculture industries play in the continued success of these programs, opponents of maritime and agriculture have damaged the overall credibility of P.L. 480. Of particular note are the writings and public statements of Cornell University’s Dr. Christopher Barrett. Dr. Barrett recently testified before the House Foreign Affairs committee on Food Aid reform issues – a hearing that the maritime industry was specifically excluded from. Dr. Barrett’s testimony at that hearing is representative of the kind of flawed

²² *Id.*

²³ *See, e.g.* Barrett Testimony at 5-6, *supra* note 16.

²⁴ *Id.* at 7. MARAD projected that, based on their analysis of trends in Cargo Preference from 1990 through 2013, the U.S.-Flag liner (non-dry bulk and non-tanker) fleet would decline to 76 ships by 2023. MARAD noted in the same report, however, that the liner fleet is currently at 73 vessels as of April 2015, indicating their projections may have been optimistic. With all vessel types included, the U.S.-Flag privately-owned self-propelled fleet in the international trade is 81 ships as of April 2015. *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.* at 8. Generally speaking, each ship represents two crews of approximately 20 crewmembers, officers and engineers, thus each ship lost represents the loss of approximately 40 jobs. MARAD notes in their report that the “number of mariner jobs associated with the loss of 3 ships is approximately 120 mariners.” *Id.* at 8.

²⁶ *Id.* at 17.

²⁷ *See generally* Barrett Testimony, *supra* note 16.

²⁸ MARAD Impacts Report at 3.

scholarship and willful distortion of facts common amongst those seeking to end Cargo Preference and in-kind Food Aid. Given his lack of experience with the maritime industry, he made a common mistake and focused almost all of his attention on the ships and virtually ignored the importance of trained, reliable and trustworthy American crews in his criticisms. Where he did mention the mariners, he still got it wrong, even going so far as to claim that reductions in Food Aid cargoes have not resulted in the loss of any vessels or jobs²⁹ – facts that are easily disproven by the MARAD study referenced above.³⁰ His cherry picking of facts and data, and his reprehensible, ridiculous claim that Congress’ support of Food Aid cargo preference represents the “trade [of] 11 or 12 children’s lives for a single job[.]” demonstrates the depths to which the opponents of Cargo Preference will go in their efforts to destroy America’s military readiness. He does a discredit to himself, his university and those he represents with his misguided and appalling rhetoric.

This type of internecine warfare between stakeholders in our International Food Aid programs is counterproductive. Instead of working with us to find meaningful ways to make the process more efficient without sacrificing the domestic benefits, or working to help increase annual appropriations to help feed more people, we are instead attacked and vilified. Rather than acknowledging us as crucial partners, we are treated like robber-barons. That is unfair. The men and women of the merchant marine, including the members maritime labor represents, are committed, patriotic Americans who go to work every day, work hard every day, and take risks most Americans never face on the job, often while delivering Food Aid. Whether it is bad weather, pirates or terrorists, the men and women who crew the vessels carrying Food Aid have done so gladly, with honor and courage, and they deserve more respect than the Food Aid Reform community has given them.

The Food Aid Reform community also refuses to acknowledge the legitimate concerns those of us in the maritime and agriculture communities have about the potential for fraud and abuse that would come with shifting the basis of our Food Aid programs from in-kind aid to one that is primarily cash based. Despite on-going press reports about concerns with USAID administration of foreign aid programs³¹ and an internal World Food Program audit indicating that USAID cash vouchers for food have been diverted away from the hungry to middlemen profiteers,³² the Food Aid Reform community continues to insist that cash is as safe from diversion and theft as in-kind Food Aid.³³

²⁹ Barrett Testimony at 6 (stating “[y]et, the 2012 reforms that reduced cargo preference coverage from 75% to 50% do not appear to have led to a single vessel ceasing ocean freight service nor to the loss of any mariner jobs.”).

³⁰ MARAD Impacts Report at 47 (stating “[t]he number of vessels in the total U.S.-flag international trading fleet has fallen from 106 at the beginning of 2011 to 81 at the end of 2014, representing a loss of 25 vessels and up to 1,000 mariner jobs.”).

³¹ Saba Imtiaz, *U.S. Aid Agency’s Efforts Are Yielding Dubious Results*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 13, 2015, at A8.

³² George Russell, *U.N. Agency Food Aid Vouchers In Syrian Crisis Diverted And Sold For Cash*, FOX NEWS, April 15, 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/04/17/un-agency-food-aid-vouchers-in-syrian-crisis-diverted-and-sold-for-cash/?intcmp=latestnews> [hereinafter WFP Audit Article].

³³ See, e.g. Barrett Testimony at 7. Dr. Barrett goes so far as to claim that “[a]nother myth is that cash-based food aid programs are somehow more vulnerable to theft and corruption, although not a shred of serious evidence exists to support this claim,” despite the World Food Program’s audit finding diversion of

That argument strains credulity. The Government Accountability Office has called for increased internal controls over cash-based programs, noting that “USAID relies on implementing partners for financial oversight of [its Emergency Food Security Program] projects but does not require them to conduct comprehensive risk assessments to plan financial oversight activities, and it provides little related procedural guidance to partners and its own staff[.]” and that “[a]s a result, partners may neglect to implement appropriate financial controls in areas that are most vulnerable to fraud, diversion, and misuse of EFSP funding.”³⁴

Finally, there is an elephant in the room that few in the Food Aid Reform community seem willing to accept or acknowledge. Despite the great work that Food Aid has done over the years feeding billions of hungry people across the world, there is no denying that foreign aid remains unpopular with the American people. A 2013 Pew Poll found that, in response to the sequester, 48% of Americans – the largest percentage for of any of the 19 categories of spending tested – supported cuts to foreign assistance programs.³⁵ The same poll indicated that of all the categories tested, only foreign aid failed to muster a majority of Americans supporting increased or sustained funding.

Despite foreign aid’s lack of public support, the P.L. 480 Food for Peace program has survived and thrived for sixty years, thanks in large part to the domestic economic benefit provided to America’s farmers and mariners. That support has provided a base of political support that has ensured that P.L. 480 would be shielded from the harshest of spending cuts necessitated by public concerns about the federal budget deficit and the national debt.

Without the support made possible by the coalition of agriculture, maritime and our private voluntary organizations, Food Aid would likely see major cuts, if not complete repeal. Were Congress to repeal Cargo Preference for Food Aid or otherwise make major changes to the P.L. 480 program that reduce its domestic economic benefit, there is a strong chance that the program itself may not survive in today’s harsh budgetary climate. Were that to happen, the Food Aid Reform community would have no one to blame but themselves for the disastrous impact such cuts would have on the welfare of millions of hungry people around the world who rely on the generosity of the American people to

vouchers in Syria, which was published months before his testimony. *See* WFP Audit Article, *supra* note 31.

³⁴ U.S. GOV. ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, INTERNATIONAL CASH-BASED FOOD ASSISTANCE: USAID HAS DEVELOPED PROCESSES FOR INITIAL PROJECT APPROVAL BUT SHOULD STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT 1 (2015). The GAO report is scathing in its criticism of some of USAID’s practices. It notes that USAID had only two people on the ground in Syria to oversee a half billion-dollar program. *Id.* at 29. USAID let contractors use overhead satellite imagery to monitor “food for work” programs in Kenya. *Id.* at 43. When GAO visited a food for work program in Somalia, they noted that no one from USAID had been there for over a year to check on the program. *Id.* at 43. USAID is actually handing out envelopes of cash to crowds in developing countries, particularly Syria, without any accountability or record of how that cash gets spent. *Id.* at 10.

³⁵ MICHAEL DIMOCK ET AL., PEW RESEARCH CTR. FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS, AS SEQUESTER DEADLINE LOOMS, LITTLE SUPPORT FOR CUTTING MOST PROGRAMS 1 (Feb. 22, 2013), <http://www.people-press.org/2013/02/22/as-sequester-deadline-looms-little-support-for-cutting-most-programs/>.

survive. We owe it to the American taxpayer to do our best to provide as much domestic benefit, economic and diplomatic, for every dollar they willingly send abroad to help needy people.

As has often been the case, those pushing “reform” are blind to the reality that their efforts, if successful, could destroy the entire program. Fundamentally changing the Food for Peace program from an in-kind program that provides domestic benefits to the agriculture and maritime industry while supporting our diplomatic mission abroad into a cash giveaway program is ensuring the program ends up on the road to permanent repeal. While we are committed to working with Congress and the Executive Branch to ensure Food Aid’s continued viability and to explore efforts to create greater efficiencies, we cannot support any changes that would undermine the political viability of such a critical program to the lives of so many. That would be irresponsible and morally wrong.

To be clear, those of us in the maritime industry wish to continue the decades long partnership between America’s farmers, her mariners, and those committed to feeding the hungry around the world. This is a partnership that has worked for over sixty years and we hope will continue to work for many, many more. I would call upon all to soften the bitterly divisive rhetoric being used against the maritime and agriculture industries. Accusing us of wanting to starve children in order to line the pockets of greedy foreign businessmen is not only a ridiculous falsehood, it undermines the credibility of those making that argument.

America’s Cargo Preference laws are critical to the continued existence of our merchant marine. Tinkering with P.L. 480 and the calls for repeal of Cargo Preference threaten that existence, and threaten our overall military readiness.

The bottom line is simple – without cargo there are no ships, without ships there are no mariners. The American merchant mariner is a critical national security asset that must be protected. Continued Congressional support for Cargo Preference, Food Aid, the Maritime Security Program and our other federal maritime programs ensures that we have a sufficient mariner pool to meet our commercial and military sealift needs no matter the crisis, foreseen or unforeseen. It is critical that we do not allow the Food Aid Reform community to accomplish what the Royal Navy could not do in the Revolution, what German submarines could not do during World War II, and what pirates off Africa could not do in 2009.

I strongly urge you to reject the dangerous arguments made by those seeking an end to in-kind Food Aid and Cargo Preference and continue the steadfast, bipartisan support the United States Merchant Marine has enjoyed from Congress for over two hundred years.