



April 25, 2019

The Honorable John Hoeven, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committees on Domestic Justice and Human Development and International Justice and Peace, Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Rural Life, we wish to address the moral and human dimensions of the FY 2020 Agriculture Appropriations legislation. The nation's priorities must include robust funding for both domestic and international food aid, support for family farms, and conservation and rural development programs, while resisting harmful cuts. Many of these program areas have already been subject to reductions over time. Further cuts would be detrimental to vulnerable people and communities.

In *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food*, the U.S. bishops wrote, "The primary goals of agricultural policies should be providing food for all people and reducing poverty among farmers and farm workers in this country and abroad." Adequate nutrition is essential to protect human life and dignity. We must also promote good stewardship of the land and natural resources and provide needed support to struggling farmers and ranchers. In our soup kitchens and parish food pantries, we see the faces of poor and hungry people every day both domestically and internationally. As a faith community, we feed those without work, pregnant women and children, and seniors on limited incomes across the globe. With over 40 million people living in food insecure households in the U.S. alone, programs like SNAP are vital to provide essential nutrition to those most in need. Our nation must prioritize programs that assist poor and hungry people and promote good stewardship.

In addition to refraining from making cuts that have the potential to impact millions of people, it is vital to provide robust funding for the following domestic programs:

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): Fully fund the WIC nutrition program ensuring that all qualified families have access to life saving nutritional and health services. Provide investments to ensure program operations can respond adequately to changes in the economy and rising caseloads and food costs.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): The recent passage of the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill reauthorization was a critical success in protecting and improving our nation's domestic nutrition programs. We urge you to ensure adequate funds for SNAP and to fund fully state education and training programs. Investment in SNAP ensures those in need of food assistance have access to critical programs while fully funding state education and training programs including case management that provides the tools needed to help low-income families find work and self-sufficiency.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP): Provide **full funding levels as required by the 2018 Farm Bill** for these programs. The TEFAP program is the backstop for food security in communities across the country providing roughly 20% of food distributed by local hunger-relief organizations. The CSFP helps to ensure adequate food assistance is provided to the growing population of low-income seniors. Faith communities and other charities are essential in providing food packages to hungry seniors in their local communities and are critical partners in the TEFAP program.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): For 50 years CACFP has supplemented the diets of vulnerable Americans by providing nutritious meals and snacks. It is imperative to increase funding for CACFP to continue supporting the health and wellness of the over 4 million Americans served by this program.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): Provide robust funding for CSP to help farmers better conserve and care for farm land for future generations. Strong conservation programs are necessary to promote good stewardship of creation and provide needed support to family farms.

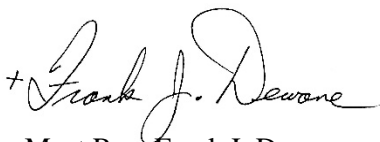
Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP): Maintain 2018 Farm Bill mandatory funding for LAMP to expand access to local fresh and nutritious food and help farmers and ranchers innovate new farm and food-related businesses to increase rural economic opportunity and help rural communities thrive.

International Food Assistance: The Administration has proposed cutting all funding for the Food for Peace, McGovern-Dole Food for Education, and Food for Progress programs. We strongly oppose this decision and ask that Congress maintain their support for these programs. Such cuts come at a time of unparalleled need. Food assistance saves and improves the lives of millions of people each year, in countries like South Sudan, Yemen, Guatemala and Honduras. Cutting funding for these programs puts lives at risk, undermines progress towards reducing extreme poverty, harms U.S. interests, and may lead to a more unstable world. Given the uptick in projected needs going into 2019, we ask Congress to increase funding to Food for Peace to \$1.9 billion in FY 2020 and McGovern-Dole to \$210.2 million. Furthermore, Food for Progress does not have a line-item in the appropriations bill, in light of the Administration's proposal, we ask that Congress provide explicit support for the continuation of this program.

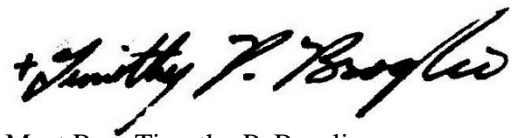
Food for Peace Non-Emergency: Development Food Security Awards (DFSAs) build resilience, strengthen agricultural capacity, and improve livelihoods for the most vulnerable, reducing the need to provide future emergency assistance. Non-emergency funding also supports the Farmer-to-Farmer program, which matches volunteer U.S. farming and agriculture experts with development programs overseas. Pursuant to the 2018 Farm Bill, a minimum of \$365 million of Food for Peace funding should go to non-emergency programs, though additional funding could be directed to this purpose. We ask that you support at least the minimum funding level for non-emergency programs in the FY 2020 appropriations, with clear direction that at least \$350 million be used for DFSAs.

At a time of continuing budgetary constraints and competition for agricultural resources, the needs of those who are hungry, poor and vulnerable should come before assistance to those who are relatively well off. We ask that you protect and fund programs that feed hungry people, help the most vulnerable farmers, strengthen rural communities, and promote good stewardship of God's creation.

Sincerely yours,



Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of Venice
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice
and Human Development



Most Rev. Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA
Chairman, Committee on International Justice
and Peace



Sr. Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA



Mr. Sean Callahan
President
Catholic Relief Services



Mr. James Ennis
Executive Director
Catholic Rural Life



April 25, 2019

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr., Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

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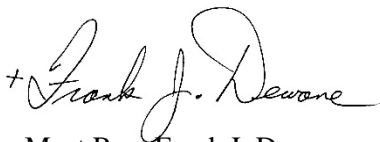
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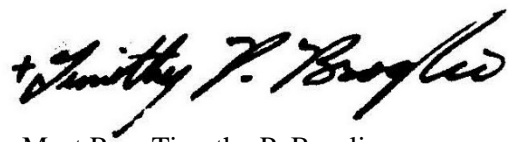
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