



July 12, 2021

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

We write 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. Our Catholic organizations work with Congress every year on a range of our priorities, including protecting migrants, supporting the poor and vulnerable, and protecting the unborn. Here, we wish to address the moral and human dimensions of the FY 2022 Agriculture Appropriations legislation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put pressure on our communities, food system, agricultural workers, and family budgets. Increased resources and flexibilities for USDA programs have gone a long way to support farmers, families, and communities throughout the course of the pandemic. As we look beyond our current crisis, we must take its lessons with us to decisively respond to the needs in our communities and around the world.

In a pastoral reflection, [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." We must work to ensure every person has enough nutritious food to sustain a life with dignity. We must also promote good stewardship of the land and natural resources and provide support to struggling farmers and ranchers. In our soup kitchens and food pantries, in our development work overseas, we see the faces of poor and hungry people every day. As a faith community, we feed those without work, pregnant women and children, and seniors on limited incomes across the globe. We are committed to continuing this work, which is strengthened and complemented by the work of USDA programs. We encourage you to make robust investments in the following programs which are vital to provide essential nutrition and support to those most in need:

**Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** Fully fund the WIC nutrition program ensuring that all families in need 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):** We urge you to ensure adequate funds for SNAP and to fully fund state education and training programs. Investment in SNAP ensures those in need of food assistance have access to critical programs while adequately funding state education and training programs, including case management 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. LAMP also helps farmers and ranchers start new farm and food-related businesses to increase rural economic opportunity and help rural communities thrive.

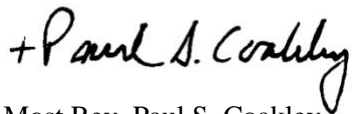
**International Food Assistance:** The Administration has proposed funding for the Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education programs. We welcome the Administration's renewed support for these programs and ask that Congress continue to maintain their strong bipartisan support for these programs as well. The Global Network Against Food Crises reported that 155 million people in 55 countries needed life-saving emergency food assistance in 2020, a 20 million person increase compared to 2019. By the end of 2021, the World Food Program warns that the number of people in need of emergency food assistance could reach more than 270 million people. COVID-19 secondary impacts increased hunger across communities, as did a plague of desert locusts, increasing violent conflict, natural disasters like floods and droughts, and other crises. Food assistance saves and improves the lives of millions of people each year, including in places like South Sudan, Yemen, Madagascar, countries in the Sahel, and Guatemala and Honduras. Despite many disruptions in daily life around the world, including many market or school closures, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was able to work with local community partners to find ways to continue to reach those facing hunger and poverty. For example, in Guatemala CRS was able to work with local parent-teacher associations to repackage food and ensure students in the McGovern-Dole programs were able to continue to have access to a meal and educational materials. Funding for these programs saves lives, reduces extreme poverty, supports U.S. interests, and may lead to a more stable world. Given the projected needs in 2021 and looking ahead to 2022, we ask Congress to increase funding to Food for Peace to \$2 billion in FY 2022 and McGovern-Dole to \$245 million.

**Food for Peace Non-Emergency:** Resilience Food Security Activity awards (RFSAs) help communities recover from disasters and conflict with a multi-sector approach designed to build resilience, strengthen agricultural capacity, and improve livelihoods for the most vulnerable. These programs aim to reduce 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 Title II funding should go to non-emergency programs, though additional funding could be allocated for this purpose. We ask that you support at least the minimum funding level for Food for Peace Title II non-emergency programs in the FY 2022 appropriations with clear direction that at least \$350 million be used for RFSAs.

**Rural Housing:** Support rural residents by preserving affordable rural rental housing through adequate funding for Section 514 and 515 programs and the Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization Demonstration. Ensure that sufficient rental assistance and rural housing vouchers are available to keep these units affordable to rural workers and families.

Thank you for your consideration and efforts to protect and fund programs that support families, feed hungry people, help the most vulnerable farmers, strengthen rural communities, and promote good stewardship of God's creation.

Sincerely yours,



Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley  
Archbishop of Oklahoma City  
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice  
and Human Development



Most Rev. David J. Malloy  
Bishop of Rockford  
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