



USA Maritime Statement on Drastic Cut in Food Aid

WASHINGTON D.C. (February 14, 2011) – USA Maritime (<http://www.usamaritime.org/>) today released the following statement regarding the 42 percent cut of more than \$800 million proposed by House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers from the President's combined food aid budget for P.L. 480 Title II (Title II) and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program (McGovern-Dole) from its FY 2010 level.

“The proposal takes a massively disproportionate bite out of America’s longstanding international food aid program and will result in more starvation among the world’s poor. This budget reduction will cut off or reduce the number of needy beneficiaries in food aid programs by approximately 18 million – more than the combined populations of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

“Proposed cuts would reduce the Title II and the McGovern-Dole program by nearly \$800 million (from \$1.9 billion to roughly \$1.1 billion). These cuts would hit as rising food prices are making the world’s poorest people even more vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition in countries where the U.S. has vital national security and foreign policy interests, including Afghanistan, Algeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Haiti and Yemen.

“The proposal also will cause significant losses of jobs and economic benefits at home. In the current challenging budget environment, Americans expect to have to tighten their belts, but this proposal amounts to strangulation of one of America’s most effective humanitarian and foreign policy program – feeding 50 million people each year – which also pays economic dividends at home.

“The combination of handling processing and transporting U.S. food aid commodities alone – not including farming costs – results in more than \$1.9 billion in output from U.S. industries, \$523 million in earnings for American households and more than 13,000 jobs. Deep sea freight alone results in more than 97,000 jobs in other parts of the U.S. economy.

“For more than 60 years, American farmers and ships loading U.S. grown commodities in ports like Houston, New Orleans, and Norfolk have delivered food aid to the world’s hungry and malnourished. In-kind aid programs like Food for Peace are successful at meeting the nutritional needs of the chronically hungry while remaining cost-effective. We appeal to the House to look again at the wisdom of these disproportionate cuts.