



STATE OF ARKANSAS
ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR

February 29, 2016

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Gayle E. Smith
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Administrator Smith,

Utilizing the bounty of the U.S. agriculture sector to provide for the world's hunger, particularly through the Food for Peace Program, is a major advancement of the United States' work to improve nutrition and food security globally. On behalf of the State of Arkansas, I would like to respectfully request that U.S. grown rice be prioritized during the procurement process for international food aid efforts.

As you are aware, H.R. 2029, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2016, directly supports the food aid efforts by providing an additional \$250 million to be directed towards supporting emergency response efforts. Programs such as the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, Food for Progress Program and the Food for Peace Program will be the gateway for implementing these response efforts to those in need.

Rice, being the most consumed commodity in the world, plays a very important role as a staple food for more than half of the world's population. U.S. grown rice has historically been a part of the USDA and USAID food aid assistance programs. Its addition to the U.S. government commodity master list has made it available to provide

new opportunities for critical humanitarian efforts. It is also a vital part of Arkansas' economy. Arkansas is proud to be the leading producer of rice in the United States, accounting for 50% of the nation's total rice production. Arkansans take great pride in producing a safe and nutritious commodity that helps to alleviate hunger and provide to those in need around the world.

The U.S. produced a substantial rice crop in 2015 resulting in significant stocks currently available. This paves the way for the United States to provide greater assistance in an economical fashion, through food relief programs, to those in need around the world.

Your assistance in prioritizing the procurement of U.S. grown rice for delivery through food relief programs would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Asa Hutchinson