

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 1, 2014

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Thank you for your continued support of our nation's food banks. We write to urge you to once again use your administrative authorities to ensure that USDA is utilizing all possible resources to ensure a steady stream of TEFAP commodities to our nation's food banks. Specifically, we encourage you to utilize existing Section 32 funds and be proactive with regard to TEFAP purchases, including bonus purchases and specialty crop purchases. Food banks across the country are depending on USDA to continue this commitment.

Low-income families continue to feel the impacts of the recession, and the need for emergency food assistance has outpaced supply. While national unemployment rates have dropped, millions of people continue to struggle to get back on their feet—struggling to find work or getting by on reduced wages and hours or on one family income when there once were two. High food and fuel costs impact available resources for both food banks and the hungry families they serve. Thirty-seven million people—one in eight Americans—are now receiving emergency food assistance each year through the nation's food banks.

In FY2012, USDA made \$304 million in bonus commodity purchases that were distributed through TEFAP to hungry Americans. Unfortunately for food banks, as a result of strong agriculture markets, USDA purchased \$230 million bonus commodity purchases in FY2013, which is a 24% decline. Unless additional purchases are made before the end of FY 2014, the purchase amount for FY2014 is also expected to decline even further to \$194 million. Food banks are struggling to meet high demand, sometimes unable to fill order requests from local agencies. Such significant shortfalls could be ameliorated by USDA making additional TEFAP commodity purchases and maximizing market surplus opportunities.

Further, the Managers statement accompanying the recent Farm Bill includes language urging USDA to work toward a balanced delivery of commodities to food banks. We echo this statement to "strongly encourage the Secretary to review potential bonus and surplus removal purchases on a real-time basis and adjust the timing of mandatory food purchases and deliveries to address periods when bonus and specialty crop deliveries are expected to be low. Having a

more balanced delivery of both mandatory and bonus food purchases will enable emergency feeding organizations to better serve those in need.”

TEFAP commodities are critical to emergency food providers. Our nation’s food banks are stretched thin meeting sustained high need in their communities. According to Feeding America, TEFAP commodities comprise, on average, about 20% of the food moving through their network of more than 200 nationwide food banks. Without additional TEFAP commodities, food banks will be hard-pressed to continue providing current levels of food assistance to those in need. Once again we encourage you to utilize your existing funds and authority to fulfill TEFAP commodity purchases.

We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to hearing from you regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

  
MARCIA L. FUDGE  
Member of Congress

  
BOB GOODLATTE  
Member of Congress

  
Member of Congress

  
Member of Congress

  
Member of Congress

  
Member of Congress

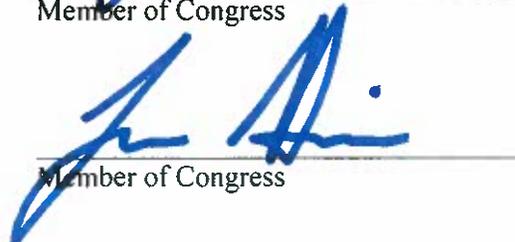
  
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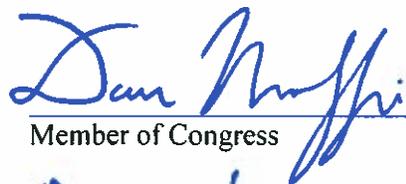
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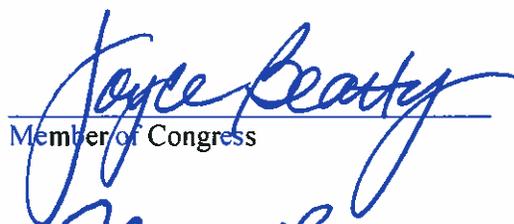
  
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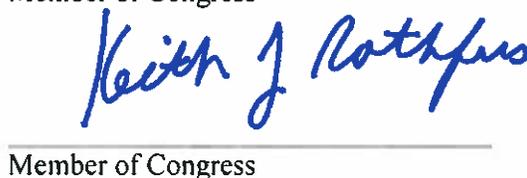
  
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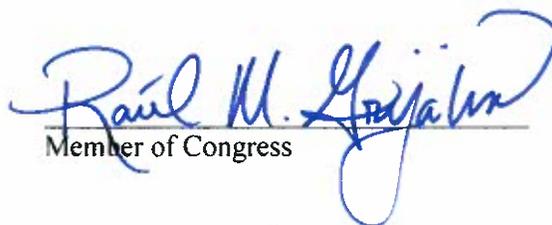
  
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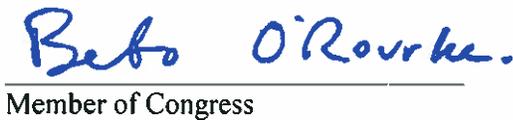
  
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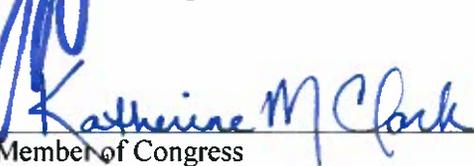
  
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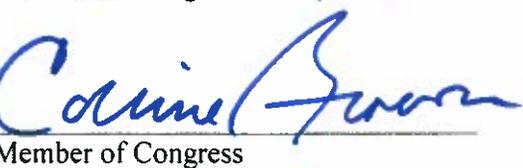
  
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