

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to express our profound alarm and strong opposition to the reported decision under your leadership to withhold nearly 500 metric tons of emergency food aid and instead incinerate those supplies once they were left to expire. As you know, these rations were designed to nourish vulnerable children in conflict-affected regions such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. This action is not only morally indefensible, but also wasteful, strategically shortsighted, and completely counter to the entirety of your work while in the Senate.

The emergency high-energy biscuits in question, which served as nutritional lifelines and were purchased at a taxpayer cost of \$800,000, have reportedly now expired after sitting in warehouses for months.¹ We understand that instead of delivering this emergency assistance to malnourished children as originally intended, the State Department will destroy the biscuits at an additional cost to the taxpayer of \$130,000.² According to reporting in the Atlantic, USAID employees and inventory data say this food could have fed 1.5 million children for a week.³ Given the alarming rates of food insecurity and famine in regions like Gaza and Sudan, the decision to burn lifesaving aid produced by American farmers and paid for by American tax dollars amounts to a tragic abdication of our global humanitarian responsibilities and hurts our own global interests.

In May, Reuters reported that more than 60,000 metric tons of food aid, including ready-to-use therapeutic food, was sitting idle in warehouses across the globe.⁴ In your May testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, you committed to ensuring that food aid would reach its intended recipients before spoiling.⁵ In another hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, you also testified that “We’re going to continue to do food aid... We’re going to do more food aid than any other country on the planet, times 10”.⁶ Yet, reports now show that the directive to destroy this food had already been issued by the time of your public assurances. We

¹ Kiros, Hana. “The Trump Administration Is about to Incinerate 500 Tons of Emergency Food.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 14 July 2025, www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2025/07/usaids-emergency-food-incinerate-trump/683532/.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Donati, Jessica, et al. “US Aid Cuts Leave Food for Millions Mouldering in Storage.” *Reuters*, 16 May 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-aid-cuts-leave-food-millions-mouldering-storage-2025-05-16/>.

⁵ *Budget Hearing – Department of State and Related Programs*, House Committee on Appropriations, May 21. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JANo8Z8uv9A>

find this inconsistency troubling, and it raises serious concerns about transparency and accountability within the Department of State's management of humanitarian aid.

We are also alarmed by reports indicating that internal USAID memos requesting urgent approval to move the biscuits went unanswered for months.⁷ If accurate, this speaks to a systemic breakdown in communication and leadership that has paralyzed America's food aid delivery systems.

Supporting global food security enhances our national security and creates conditions in recipient countries that support our geopolitical and economic interests. Food insecurity threatens to exacerbate poverty, strain societal tensions, and increase dissatisfaction with governments, thereby increasing the risk of social, economic, and political instability—key drivers of mass migration and terrorism. Reducing foreign aid weakens our ability to address these threats.

Moreover, our withdrawal from congressionally mandated foreign assistance undermines our role as a global leader in humanitarian aid. For example, following the Trump Administration's decision to downsize and subsequently eliminate USAID, China moved quickly to fill the void—donating \$2 million in rice to Uganda in March and expanding aid to Nepal to address shortages we left behind.

Therefore, we respectfully request answers to the following questions:

1. Who specifically authorized this destruction order, when was that order authorized, and on what grounds was it deemed preferable to distribution or repurpose?
2. Did you intentionally mislead the House Appropriations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee in your testimony by committing to disperse food aid to its intended recipients before expiring? If not, what communications or actions did you take to ensure that State Department staff would proceed with delivering food aid?
3. Why was this food aid not redirected to other areas in urgent need, such as Sudan or Gaza, before expiration?
4. What would have been the expected cost to distribute or repurpose the emergency food aid?
5. What steps has your office taken to ensure that other existing emergency food aid does not meet a similar fate?
6. Please provide an accounting of all U.S. government-purchased emergency food commodities and supplies currently in storage, including their expiration timelines and intended destinations.

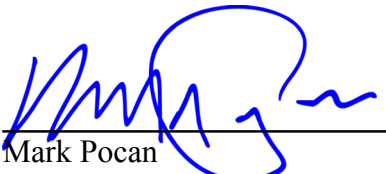
⁶ *FY 26 State Department Posture: Protecting American Interests*, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 21. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0Mo9LCJg_Y

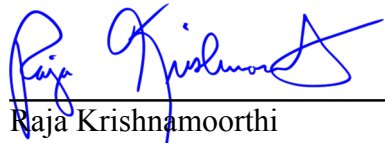
⁷ Kiros, Hana. "The Trump Administration Is about to Incinerate 500 Tons of Emergency Food." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 14 July 2025, www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2025/07/usaaid-emergency-food-incinerate-trump/683532/.

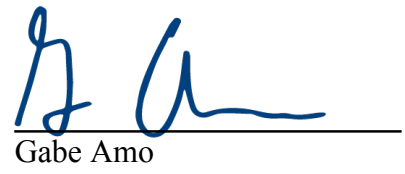
The United States has long led the world in humanitarian assistance, not only as a matter of compassion but also as a cornerstone of global stability and diplomacy. Destroying aid that could save lives undermines that legacy and damages our standing in the international community.

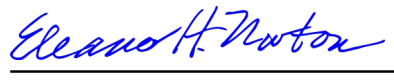
We urge you to immediately prioritize the distribution of all remaining and viable food assistance stockpiles. American leadership demands nothing less.


Sincerely,

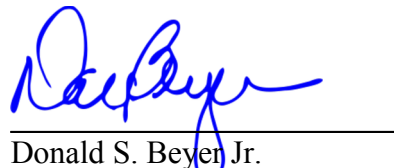



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

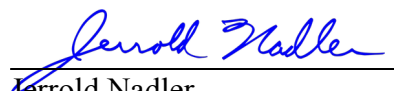
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress


Gabe Amo
Member of Congress


Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Valerie P. Foushee
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Jerrold Nadler
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Joaquin Castro
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Steve Cohen
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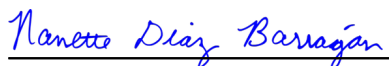
Scott H. Peters
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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Gwen S. Moore
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Ilhan Omar
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MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



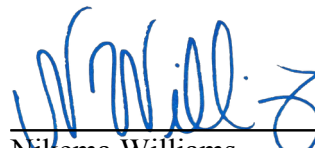
Andre Carson
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Julia Brownley
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George Latimer
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Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



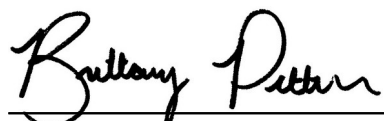
Jan Schakowsky
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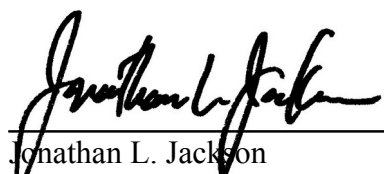
Lloyd Doggett
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Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



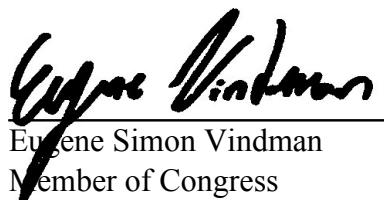
Jonathan L. Jackson
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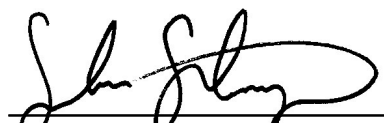
Mike Thompson
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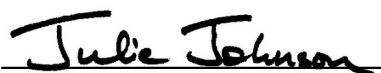
Seth Moulton
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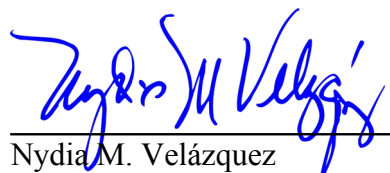
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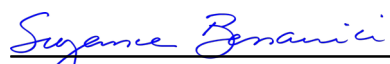
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Greg Casar
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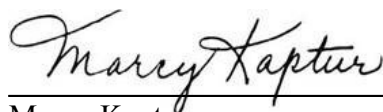
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Marcy Kaptur
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Lucy McBath
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