

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 24, 2022

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

The Honorable Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Administrator Power,

We are writing to urge the immediate release of resources within the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust, an emergency international food aid program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The trust was established in 1980 to provide assistance to hungry people in times of exceptional need – to be used as a resource of last resort. The scale of hunger the world is currently facing clearly meets that test, making the trust’s release highly appropriate.

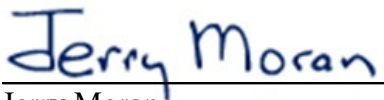
Around the world, approximately 45 million people are teetering on the brink of famine across 43 countries; the prospect of simultaneous famines looms large and at an unprecedented scale. A blend of conflict, weather disasters, and now COVID-19 has driven up hunger over the previous seven years, and especially over the last two years. It is difficult to overstate the severity of the humanitarian food crisis facing the world at this moment.

In Afghanistan, more than half the population (approximately 23 million people) face acute hunger and over three million children are suffering from malnutrition. Famine-like conditions are already present in Southern Madagascar with at least 1.3 million people requiring emergency food interventions. Five million people require food assistance in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The list of areas facing severe hunger goes on, including in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Northeast Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The world is facing the most destabilizing threat from hunger since World War II.

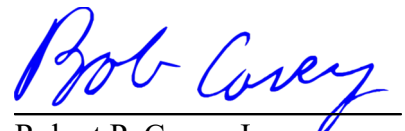
The Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust was designed to respond to exceptional global food security needs in a way that would not force impossible decisions by USAID or USDA about which nations or people receive support and which do not. It is a release valve for intensifying and compounding global food emergencies like the ones we are experiencing today. The last release of the fund occurred in 2014, and yet today’s global hunger landscape is far more threatening.

At times like today when emergency funds available under Food for Peace Title II are clearly insufficient to meet global hunger needs, the Secretary of Agriculture can authorize the trust's release at the request of the USAID Administrator. We strongly urge those actions to occur. Global food security needs have clearly outpaced the United States' capacity to respond through other food assistance resources. We urge you to utilize the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust to save lives in this unprecedented time. It is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



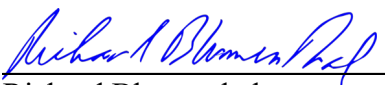
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



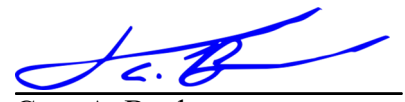
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



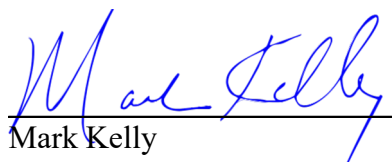
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



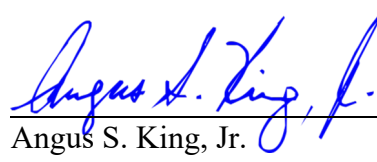
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



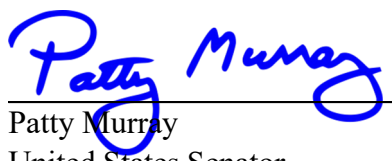
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



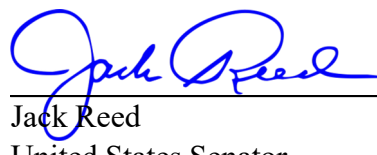
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator