Late for Dinner: The Case Against Cargo Preferences for Food Aid

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

Status Quo policy on US food aid to foreign countries requires at least 50% of the food to be delivered on US-flagged vessels, a policy known as Cargo Preferences for Food Aid, or CPFA. The CPFA requirement used to be 75% US ships, but that was lowered to 50% in 2012 and lobbyists for the maritime industry are successfully telling Congress not to lower it any further. President Trump recently even proposed raising it to 100%, although it appears he has backed off from that idea. CPFA creates delays in food aid arrival in starving countries because they have to wait until US-flag ships are available. Delay means death, because people die while waiting for food to arrive. And in the 2A backup evidence, you can read about the long-term health impacts on children where, even if the food does arrive eventually, the malnutrition they experience while waiting for it leads to lifetime health problems.

CPFA also raises the cost of food aid. The limited number of ships available to carry the aid results in bidding up the price for their services, given that they don’t have to compete against foreign ships. Higher shipping costs directly link to less food for starving people, since government agencies specifically cut food aid programs to pay for the higher cost of shipping.

If you’re worried about topicality, some things to keep in mind. First, the plan meets all the definitions given in the 1AC. Second, while the food aid policies themselves (who should get food, what kinds of food, etc) are managed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Dept of Agriculture (USDA), the CPFA itself is directly managed by the US Dept of Transportation. This plan changes only the CPFA and not any extra-topical policies on food aid itself, only how the bags of food are transported.

Be careful when arguing for this plan not to confuse or mingle it with another food aid policy that many experts also advocate abolishing: the US food sourcing requirement. The food that is sent as aid is required to be grown and sourced within the US, rather than buying it locally or regionally near the poor countries affected by the need. Removing that requirement would also speed up delivery and reduce cost, but it’s not a transportation policy, so we can’t do it, and we don’t in this plan. We cite here evidence that is specific to the transportation aspect only, CPFA, and specifies the impacts caused by CPFA to make the case.

Late for Dinner: The Case Against Cargo Preferences for Food Aid 3

OBSERVATION 1. We offer the following DEFINITIONS. 3

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. One key FACT 3

The Cargo Preference for Food Aid, or CPFA, requires US-flagged ships to carry foreign aid shipments of food overseas 3

OBSERVATION 3. The HARMS. 4

HARM 1. Food aid delays. We see this 3 subpoints 4

A. Shipping restrictions delay food aid. 4

B. Quantification. 20 million people on the brink of starvation 4

C. Impact: People die. Delays under current shipping rules make the difference between life and death 4

HARM 2. Higher costs 5

A. Link: Cargo Preference for Food Aid raises the cost by over $50 million per year 5

B. Link: Less food aid. They cut an average of 3 food aid requests per year because of the higher cost 5

C. The Impact: Food aid cuts mean even more starvation deaths 5

OBSERVATION 4. We offer the following PLAN implemented by Congress and the President 6

OBSERVATION 5. ADVANTAGES 6

ADVANTAGE 1. Lower cost 6

Food aid becomes much less costly to ship without the US-vessel requirement 6

ADVANTAGE 2. Lives saved 6

Ending cargo preferences on food aid will save lives 6

2A Evidence: End Cargo Preferences for Food Aid 7

DEFINITIONS & TOPICALITY 7

Transportation Policy: Cargo preference program is managed by the US Dept of Transportation 7

OPENING QUOTES / AFFIRMATIVE PHILOSOPHY 7

Now is the critical time to ensure food aid gets to those in need 7

INHERENCY 7

Cargo preferences require 50% of food aid to be delivered on US-flag vessels 7

History & quantification: 46.2 million recipients of aid, $1.7 billion budget, 50% US shipping requirement since 2012 8

Status Quo reforms didn’t solve: USDA couldn’t increase food shipments much due to rule interpretation 8

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 8

Higher Cost 8

US-flagged vessels cost a lot more than other ships 8

Food aid cost went up 23% due to cargo preference rules. Total was $107 million from 2011-2014 8

Cargo preference for food aid raises costs by 23% 9

Cargo preference alone raises food aid costs $150 million/year 9

Delays 9

Delayed food aid causes long-lasting health damage to hungry kids, even if it does get there eventually 9

Cargo preference-related food aid delays increase malnutrition and death among children 10

Quantification Responses (Answer To: "We can't vote AFF until we know how many lives we will save") 10

RMS Carpathia: Should Captain Rostron have waited until he knew exactly how many lives would be saved before going to rescue Titanic survivors? That’s not a good way to make life and death decisions 10

Historically, we saved millions of lives by taking action with the best information available, rather than waiting 10

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY 11

Foreign ships are available and cheaper: When the percentage requirement was reduced from 75% down to 50% in 2012, they received many new foreign ship bids and saved money 11

US food aid saves starving millions. Could do even more if we reduce shipping costs by repealing CPFA 11

A/T “Food aid not effective” – US food aid does save lives, but we can make it much better 11

A/T “Food aid not effective” – Emergency food aid has prevented many deaths since the 1980s 12

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES 12

A/T “Military reserve sealift capability gets harmed” 12

No security issue: Food aid cargo ships are too slow to be used by modern military 12

No impact: Less than 1% of sailors would potentially be affected by food aid cargo preference reform 12

Food aid cargo preference is not essential to maintaining US military capacity 12

Dept. of Defense and Dept. of Homeland Security agree: Cargo preference doesn’t help military readiness 13

Food aid cargo ships are too old and fail to meet military requirements: No impact on military preparedness 13

There’s never been any assessment of sealift reserve capability and there’s never been a need for it in any situation 13

Plenty of sailors available in case of military emergency, and CPFA isn’t cost effective 14

A/T “Preserve US fleet and sailors’ jobs” 14

Very few jobs at stake, and the cost of those jobs means we take food away from 2 million people per year 14

Cargo preference is just corporate welfare, and the needs of hungry kids should outweigh 14

Not working: US shipping capacity is declining under current rules 15

No jobs were lost when cargo preference was cut from 75% to 50% in 2012 15

Works Cited 16

Late for Dinner: The Case Against Cargo Preferences for Food Aid

In April 2017 the Associated Press reported on the urgent situation in Africa. They said QUOTE:

Associated Press 2017. (journalist Justin Lynch) 15 Apr 2017 “ICYMI: Associated Press: Corker, Coons Say Food Aid Constraints Delay Help Amid Famine” <https://www.coons.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/icymi-associated-press-corker-coons-say-food-aid-constraints-delay-help-amid-famine> (parentheses in original)

“The Bidi Bidi settlement is a sprawling complex of mud-brick houses that hold some of the world's most desperate people. With little respite from the fierce sun, arguments broke out at the food distribution site. "We don't have enough food," said Madra Dominic, one of the waiting refugees. "Right now they are reducing (food)." Uganda's government has said it is near "breaking point" and that there could be serious food shortages if more outside aid doesn't arrive.

END QUOTE. Current US transportation policies are delaying food aid to starving millions. Please join my partner and me as we affirm that Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its transportation policy.

OBSERVATION 1. We offer the following DEFINITIONS.

**Policy**: “a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2017* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy))  
  
**Substantial**: “considerable in quantity” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2017* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantially*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantially)*)*

**Transportation**: “means of conveyance or travel from one place to another” (*Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2017* [*https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transportation*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transportation)*)*

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. One key FACT

The Cargo Preference for Food Aid, or CPFA, requires US-flagged ships to carry foreign aid shipments of food overseas

Prof. Erin Lentz, Dr. Stephanie Mercier and Prof. Christopher Barrett 2017 ([Barrett](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/christopher-barrett)- professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. [Lentz](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/erin-lentz)- assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the Univ of Texas. Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; former team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture) Aug 2017 Food aid and assistance programs and the next Farm Bill <http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/files/papers/20170823%20AEI-foodaidpaper%20clean.pdf>

All three US international food aid programs—Food for Peace, Food for Progress, and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education—face a similar set of rules that constrain their efficiency in meeting their primary objective. That objective is to aid desperately hungry children and adults in extremely poor countries around the world that are faced with genuine and severe food crises. The three restrictions are:  
 All food utilized in the programs must be sourced and shipped from the United States;  
 At least 50 percent of all food aid shipped must be carried on US-flagged vessels, a requirement called Cargo Preference for Food Aid (CPFA); and  
 Until recently, organizations implementing development food aid programs in developing countries had to convert commodities to cash in those countries’ markets to be able to cover most nonfood expenses, a process known as monetization.

OBSERVATION 3. The HARMS.

HARM 1. Food aid delays. We see this 3 subpoints

1. Shipping restrictions delay food aid.

Associated Press 2017. (journalist Justin Lynch) 15 Apr 2017 “ICYMI: Associated Press: Corker, Coons Say Food Aid Constraints Delay Help Amid Famine” <https://www.coons.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/icymi-associated-press-corker-coons-say-food-aid-constraints-delay-help-amid-famine>

The United States spent roughly $2.8 billion in foreign food aid last year and is the world's largest provider of humanitarian assistance. But current regulations require most food aid to be grown in the U.S. and shipped under an American flag. "It's taken in some cases six months for those products to actually get here," Republican Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee told the AP. "We have people coming over the border (from South Sudan). They need food. We can actually buy the food cheaper, use our taxpayer dollars cheaper."

B. Quantification. 20 million people on the brink of starvation

Associated Press 2017. (journalist Justin Lynch) 15 Apr 2017 “ICYMI: Associated Press: Corker, Coons Say Food Aid Constraints Delay Help Amid Famine” <https://www.coons.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/icymi-associated-press-corker-coons-say-food-aid-constraints-delay-help-amid-famine>

The two senators on Friday toured a food distribution site at the refugee settlement, which holds more than 270,000 South Sudanese who recently fled the three-year civil war in the East African nation. The U.N. says South Sudan is part of the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II, with roughly 20 million people there and in Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen facing possible famine. Two counties in South Sudan were declared famine areas in February.

C. Impact: People die. Delays under current shipping rules make the difference between life and death

Dr. Vincent Smith & Ryan Nabil 2016 (Smith – PhD; visiting scholar and the director of Agricultural Studies at the American Enterprise Institute and professor of economics and co-director of the Agricultural Marketing Policy Center at Montana State University. Nabil - researcher at the American Enterprise Institute) “US food aid’s costly problem” 2 Nov 2016 <https://www.aei.org/publication/us-food-aids-costly-problem/>

The age and sluggishness of U.S. ships used under cargo preference has contributed to another problem. Compared to employing newer vessels and stocking them with regionally or locally sourced food, food deliveries under cargo preference are slow—sometimes [as much as 14 weeks slower](http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20151007/104039/HHRG-114-FA00-Wstate-BarrettC-20151007.pdf) than that alternative. In dire emergencies—precisely the kinds of situations that civilians in Aleppo, other parts of northern Syria, and Mosul now face—delays in the delivery of food aid can mean the difference between life and death.

HARM 2. Higher costs

1. Link: Cargo Preference for Food Aid raises the cost by over $50 million per year

Dr. Stephanie Mercier and Dr. Vincent Smith 2015 (Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; served as team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Smith – PhD economics; Professor of Economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University) 28 Sept 2015 Military readiness and food aid cargo preference: Many costs and few benefits <https://www.aei.org/publication/military-readiness-and-food-aid-cargo-preference-many-costs-and-few-benefits/>

In the econometric analysis, the key determinants of freight rates were the national flag of the vessel (US or foreign), whether it was a bulk or packaged shipment, the NGO or other entity awarding the freight contract, and the shipping line of the vessel carrying the shipment. The results of the econometric analysis, which carefully accounts for differences in shipping costs along different routes (between different US origins and different recipient countries), also indicate that for packaged shipments, the average difference between freight costs on US-flagged ships and foreign-flagged ships is even higher, on the order of $50 to $60 per tonne. These estimates imply that CPFA increased the total cost of shipping food aid by more than $200 million between January 2012 and May 2015 at an average of more than $50 million a year.

1. Link: Less food aid. They cut an average of 3 food aid requests per year because of the higher cost

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear (brackets added) <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

The Food Security Act of 1985 raised the CPFA requirement from 50 percent to 75 percent and required DOT [Dept. of Transportation] to reimburse USAID and USDA for the ocean freight cost associated with the additional 25 percent requirement, and for the portion of the freight cost that exceeded 20 percent of total commodity and freight cost (see table 2). These two reimbursements—Ocean Freight Differential (OFD) and Twenty Percent Excess Freight (TPEF)—ranged from around $50 million to over $100 million a year from fiscal years 2010 to 2012. Agencies used the reimbursement to fund additional food aid programs. After the CPFA requirement was lowered in July 2012, USAID and USDA still incurred the extra cost to meet the requirements but they no longer received any reimbursement. According to a USDA official, it funds about three fewer grant agreements per year after the reimbursements stopped because of the loss of reimbursements.

1. The Impact: Food aid cuts mean even more starvation deaths

Nicholas Kristof 2017 (journalist) NEW YORK TIMES 18 March 2017 ‘That Food Saved My Life,’ and Trump Wants to Cut It Off <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/18/opinion/sunday/that-food-saved-my-life-and-trump-wants-to-cut-it-off.html>

First, a quiz: What is the most important crisis in the world today? A.) President Trump’s false tweets that President Barack Obama wiretapped him. B.) President Trump’s war on the news media. C.) Looming famine that threatens 20 million people in four countries. Kind of answers itself, doesn’t it? “We are facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the creation of the United Nations,” [warned](http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/usgerc-stephen-o-brien-statement-security-council-missions-yemen-south-sudan-somalia?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axiosam)Stephen O’Brien, the U.N.’s humanitarian chief. “Without collective and coordinated global efforts, people will simply starve to death.” How is Trump responding to this crisis? By slashing humanitarian aid, increasing the risk that people starve in the four countries — Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria. The result is a perfect storm: Millions of children tumbling toward famine just as America abdicates leadership and cuts assistance. “This is the worst possible time to make cuts,” David Miliband, president of the International Rescue Committee, told me. He said that “the great danger” is a domino effect — that the U.S. action encourages other countries to back away as well.

OBSERVATION 4. We offer the following PLAN implemented by Congress and the President

1. Congress votes to repeal the Cargo Preferences for Food Aid rule.  
2. No change in funding, plan uses existing budgets of existing agencies.   
3. Plan takes effect the day after an affirmative ballot.  
4. All affirmative speeches may clarify

OBSERVATION 5. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Lower cost

Food aid becomes much less costly to ship without the US-vessel requirement

Vincent Smith & Ryan Nabil 2016 (Smith is a visiting scholar and the director of Agricultural Studies at the American Enterprise Institute and professor of economics and co-director of the Agricultural Marketing Policy Center at Montana State University. Nabil is a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute) “US food aid’s costly problem” 2 Nov 2016 <https://www.aei.org/publication/us-food-aids-costly-problem/>

It should come as no surprise that when competitive bids by foreign companies are permitted, food aid becomes less costly to ship. U.S. Marine Administration data indicate that shipping food aid on U.S.-flagged vessels under cargo preference costs 46 percent more than aid shipped at internationally competitive rates. Cargo preference alone increases annual shipping costs by at least $60 million.

ADVANTAGE 2. Lives saved

Ending cargo preferences on food aid will save lives

Prof. Christopher Barrett & Prof. Erin Lentz 2017 ([Barrett](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/christopher-barrett)is a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. [Lentz](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/erin-lentz)is an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the Univ of Texas) US NEWS & WORLD REPORT 30 June 2017 “How to Feed More People Worldwide” <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2017-06-30/how-the-us-can-reform-its-food-aid-to-feed-more-people-and-stem-migration>

First, so-called cargo preference laws discourage competition for food aid cargo and generate a [windfall](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-666) for ship owners (mainly foreign corporations operating U.S. subsidiaries). Contrary to widespread belief, food aid programs don't materially help U.S. farmers or mariners. The volumes of food aid purchased in and shipped from the U.S. – a fraction of 1 percent of the domestic food market and of the ocean freight cargo from U.S. ports – is far too small to boost farmers' or mariners' incomes. But those volumes are enough to save lives in famine-stricken regions and to help families avoid migrating in search of food. Removing cargo preferences will end windfall profits for foreign shipping corporations, stretch taxpayer dollars further, save lives and reduce forced migration.

2A Evidence: End Cargo Preferences for Food Aid

DEFINITIONS & TOPICALITY

Transportation Policy: Cargo preference program is managed by the US Dept of Transportation

Dr. Stephanie Mercier and Dr. Vincent Smith 2015 (Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; served as team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Smith – PhD economics; Professor of Economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University) 28 Sept 2015 Military readiness and food aid cargo preference: Many costs and few benefits <https://www.aei.org/publication/military-readiness-and-food-aid-cargo-preference-many-costs-and-few-benefits/>

The number of US-flagged oceangoing vessels has declined steadily over time, falling by more than 25 percent over just the last 10 years, from to 231 vessels in 2005 to 167 vessels at the end of March 2015. Several factors have contributed to that decline. One of the most important is that US-flagged vessels are not cost-competitive with their foreign-flagged counterparts. The Maritime Administration (MARAD) at the US Department of Transportation, which oversees the cargo preference program, conducted a 2011 study which reported that the annual operating costs of the average US-flagged vessel was 2.7 times higher than for a comparable foreign-flagged vessel, although this estimate relied on cost submissions by US maritime companies that were not audited.

OPENING QUOTES / AFFIRMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Now is the critical time to ensure food aid gets to those in need

Prof. Christopher Barrett & Prof. Erin Lentz 2017 ([Christopher Barrett](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/christopher-barrett)is a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. [Erin Lentz](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/erin-lentz)is an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow) US NEWS & WORLD REPORT 30 June 2017 “How to Feed More People Worldwide” <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2017-06-30/how-the-us-can-reform-its-food-aid-to-feed-more-people-and-stem-migration>

Today, the world confronts an unprecedented crisis of famine or near-famine conditions in four countries – Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen – and a record of more than 65 million people worldwide driven from their homes. More than ever, we need to use scarce humanitarian resources to ensure people have enough to eat so that they don't feel driven to leave their homes and communities.

INHERENCY

Cargo preferences require 50% of food aid to be delivered on US-flag vessels

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-666>

Cargo preference laws require that a percentage of U.S. government cargo, including international food aid, be transported on U.S.-flag vessels according to geographic area of destination and vessel type. One intention is to ensure a merchant marine—both vessels and mariners—capable of providing sealift capacity in times of war or national emergency, including a full, prolonged activation of the reserve fleet. The CPFA percentage requirement has varied over the years, and was reduced from 75 to 50 percent in 2012.

History & quantification: 46.2 million recipients of aid, $1.7 billion budget, 50% US shipping requirement since 2012

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear (brackets added) <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

The United States shipped more than 1 million metric tons of food aid in fiscal year 2013, intended to benefit 46.2 million people in 56 countries, at a cost of around $1.7 billion, which included commodity and freight cost. Under U.S. law, a minimum share of U.S. food aid must be shipped on U.S.-flag vessels. For the purposes of the report, we refer to that requirement as cargo preference for food aid (CPFA). The percentage requirement of CPFA has fluctuated since 1954, from the original 50 percent to 75 percent in 1985, and back to 50 percent in 2012.

Status Quo reforms didn’t solve: USDA couldn’t increase food shipments much due to rule interpretation

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-666>

Following the July 2012 reduction in the minimum percentage of food aid to be carried on U.S.-flag vessels, USAID was able to substantially increase the proportion of food aid awarded to foreign-flag vessels, which on average have lower rates, helping to reduce its average shipping rate. In contrast, USDA was able to increase the proportion of food aid awarded to foreign-flag vessels by only a relatively small amount because it is compelled by a court order to meet the minimum percentage of food aid carried on U.S.-flag vessels by individual country, a more narrow interpretation of the geographic area requirement than what USAID applies.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

Higher Cost

US-flagged vessels cost a lot more than other ships

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

U.S.-flag vessels charge higher shipping rates than foreign-flag vessels largely because of their higher operating cost. According to a MARAD study, U.S.-flag vessels face significantly higher cost, including crew cost, maintenance and repair cost, insurance cost, and overhead cost. For 2010, MARAD found that the average U.S.-flag vessel operating cost is roughly 2.7 times higher than its foreign-flag counterpart. MARAD also found that crew cost, the largest component of U.S.-flag vessels’ operating cost, was about 5.3 times higher than that of foreign-flag vessels. While crew cost accounted for about 70 percent of U.S.-flag vessel operating cost, it accounted for about 35 percent for the foreign-flag vessels.

Food aid cost went up 23% due to cargo preference rules. Total was $107 million from 2011-2014

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

The cargo preference requirements for food aid increased the total cost of shipping food aid (see table 1). We found that CPFA requirements increased the cost of shipping food aid by 23 percent, increasing the total cost of shipping food aid by $107 million. This increase covers all of USDA’s food aid purchases and USAID’s purchases of packaged food aid from April 2011 through fiscal year 2014. The extra cost to meet the CPFA requirements was $45 million for USAID’s packaged food aid, 16 percent higher than what USAID would have paid if the CPFA requirements were not applied for April 2011 through fiscal year 2014. For USDA’s food aid, the extra cost was $62 million, or 36 percent higher.

Cargo preference for food aid raises costs by 23%

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-666>

Cargo preference for food aid (CPFA) requirements increased the overall cost of shipping food aid by an average of 23 percent, or $107 million, over what the cost would have been had CPFA requirements not been applied from April 2011 through fiscal year 2014. Moreover, differences in the implementation of CPFA requirements by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) contributed to a higher shipping rate for USDA.

Cargo preference alone raises food aid costs $150 million/year

**Note: Smith is arguing there are 2 factors raising the cost of food aid. One is the US sourcing requirement for obtaining the food, the other is the cost of transport under the cargo preference rules. Our plan deals only with the cargo preferences, and Smith’s estimate at the end of the quote is counting specifically only the cargo preference cost, which is the part our plan solves. The US food sourcing requirement is extra-topical (not a transportation policy) and our plan doesn’t deal with it. And we don’t count costs or money that would be saved from repealing it, we only count the money directly linked to the cargo preferences in our plan.**

Dr. Vincent H. Smith 2015 (Professor of Economics, Montana State University) American Food Aid: Why Reform Matters April 15, 2015 statement before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/download/smith-testimony-04-14-15>

Quite stunningly, in fiscal year 2012 (October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012) the General Accountability Office (2014) reported that 45 percent of Food for Peace funds was spent on food aid transportation while only 40% of those funds was spent on food aid. In contrast, for example, Canada spends 70 percent of its food aid budget on food aid (Barrett and Lenz, 2014). While part of the reason for the exceptional proportion of total US Food for Peace program outlays allocated to transportation is the current mandate to source most food aid from the U.S. rather than from local or regional markets closer to the areas of need, the impact of the cargo preference requirement on those costs, conservatively estimated to be about $150 million a year, is also substantial.

Delays

Delayed food aid causes long-lasting health damage to hungry kids, even if it does get there eventually

Prof. Erin Lentz, Dr. Stephanie Mercier and Prof. Christopher Barrett 2017 ([Barrett](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/christopher-barrett)- professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. [Lentz](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/erin-lentz)- assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the Univ of Texas. Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; former team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture) Aug 2017 Food aid and assistance programs and the next Farm Bill <http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/files/papers/20170823%20AEI-foodaidpaper%20clean.pdf>

According to Lentz et al. (2013), transoceanic in-kind food aid also reaches individuals about 14 weeks more slowly than other forms of food assistance. Recent evidence on the first 1,000 days of life – from conception to a child reaching the age of two – shows that adequate nutrition during this window is vitally important for life outcomes. Children who are well-nourished and healthy during the first 1,000 days have higher educational attainment, increased income, healthier lives, and healthier offspring than those who are not (Black et al. 2013). Fourteen weeks is about ten percent of the first 1,000 days; delays of assistance during this crucial period can have life-long consequences, putting the human costs of slower delivery of transoceanic food aid into stark relief (Lentz and Barrett 2014).

Cargo preference-related food aid delays increase malnutrition and death among children

Dr. Vincent H. Smith 2015 (Professor of Economics, Montana State University) American Food Aid: Why Reform Matters April 15, 2015 statement before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/download/smith-testimony-04-14-15>

A related further important humanitarian concern is that food carried under cargo preference by US flag ships is typically carried on old and slow ships (which adds to the labor and other costs incurred through the cargo preference program), delaying the delivery of the emergency food aid to the children and adults who need it. Barrett and Lentz (2014) point out that such delays result in increased malnutrition and morbidity among, perhaps especially, children.

Quantification Responses (Answer To: "We can't vote AFF until we know how many lives we will save")

RMS Carpathia: Should Captain Rostron have waited until he knew exactly how many lives would be saved before going to rescue Titanic survivors? That’s not a good way to make life and death decisions

BBC News 2012 (journalist Jim Clarke) 11 Apr 2012 “Titanic disaster: How history has judged Bolton's sea captains” <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-manchester-17678822>

As water poured into the stricken ship, the Titanic's crew fired off distress flares and hammered out SOS messages on the ship's wireless. The Carpathia, more than 50 miles to the south-east, picked up the messages and raced to the rescue through the ice field. All non-essential power on the ship was shut down as Rostron pushed his ship to the limits, ordering his crew to prepare hot food, blankets and medical care for the survivors.

Historically, we saved millions of lives by taking action with the best information available, rather than waiting

Dr. D. J. Wagstaff 1986 (DVM, PhD; toxicologist with the Epidemiology andf Clinical Toxicology Unit, FDA) “Public Health and Food Safety: A Historical Association” PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS Vol 101 Nov/Dec 1986 <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiL6ufDtNLRAhVPfiYKHYZJAX8QFggeMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov%2Fpmc%2Farticles%2FPMC1477676%2Fpdf%2Fpubhealthrep00180-0062.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGBYnnuaBQ94wGdn8bSvwj209geLQ&sig2=j2Afsal69CcB_Pu596NxFw>

But of greater importance than apportioning credit for improvements in public health is the protecting of gains that have been realized from improved public health. Courses of action for doing so should be based on the best information and the best evidence available when decisions must be made about the kinds of controls to use. If certainty had been a requirement for implementing the health reforms of the late 1800s and early 1900s, hundreds of millions of lives would have been lost.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Foreign ships are available and cheaper: When the percentage requirement was reduced from 75% down to 50% in 2012, they received many new foreign ship bids and saved money

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

A higher proportion of food aid awarded to foreign-flag vessels and the decrease in shipping rates on foreign-flag vessels likely contributed to the lower shipping rates for USAID after the CPFA requirement change in 2012. Foreign-flag vessels on average charge lower shipping rates than U.S.-flag vessels (see table 3). From April 2011 through fiscal year 2014, we found that U.S.-flag vessels charged $61 ton more than foreign flag vessels for packaged food aid and $55 per metric ton more for bulk food aid. After the CPFA requirement change, foreign-flag vessels participated more in the food aid solicitation. Our estimates using statistical modeling to control for various factors show that the number of bids received for each solicitation increased by three after the 2012 change in the CPFA requirements and that all of the increase was from the increase in bids from foreign-flag vessels. According to USAID officials, after the CPFA requirement change, they have received more foreign-flag bids for some routes previously dominated by U.S.-flag vessels. Results from our regression model also indicates that the shipping rate on foreign-flag vessels decreased by 9 percent for USAID and 7 percent for USDA since the CPFA requirement change in 2012. USAID was able to award more food aid shipments to lower-priced foreign-flag vessels, which led to a statistically significant decrease in its overall shipping rates.

US food aid saves starving millions. Could do even more if we reduce shipping costs by repealing CPFA

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <http://www.hagstromreport.com/2015news_files/2015_1001_gao-aei-cargo-preference-studies.html>

U.S. food aid programs play an important role in improving food security and alleviating hunger for millions of people around the world. How well USAID and USDA can achieve food aid programs’ goals depends on the effective and efficient use of food aid resources. The elimination of reimbursements to USAID and USDA, which the agencies used to fund food aid programs, further accentuates the importance of effectively using their limited food aid resources for the programs’ goals. Under U.S. law, a minimum proportion of U.S. food aid must be shipped on U.S.-flag vessels to promote both national security and commercial interests. However, because using U.S.-flag vessels is often more expensive than using foreign-flag vessels, a larger portion of the food aid budget must go to shipping costs than if there were no such requirement.

A/T “Food aid not effective” – US food aid does save lives, but we can make it much better

Dr. Vincent H. Smith 2015 (Professor of Economics, Montana State University) American Food Aid: Why Reform Matters April 15, 2015 statement before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/download/smith-testimony-04-14-15>

The central goal of any government program should be to meet the program’s core objectives as efficiently and effectively as possible. From their inception, US Emergency and other Food Aid Programs have accomplished a great deal in alleviating hunger, malnutrition, morbidity and mortality among the world’s most desperately poor populations. However, they have not been nearly as efficient and effective as they can be and should have been in providing aid that mitigates the adverse effects of hunger and malnutrition of children and adults.

A/T “Food aid not effective” – Emergency food aid has prevented many deaths since the 1980s

Charles Abugre 2010 (regional director of the UN Millennium Campaign) CNN 13 Aug 2010 “Why foreign aid is important for Africa” <http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/08/13/aid.africa.abugre/index.html>

Food aid is the root of the international aid system, although it represents only a small proportion of total aid (three to five percent). Thanks to international emergency response, famines and other natural and human-made disasters no longer kill in the numbers they used to prior to the 1980s.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T “Military reserve sealift capability gets harmed”

No security issue: Food aid cargo ships are too slow to be used by modern military

Reuters news service 2017. “Exclusive: White House weighs tightening U.S. food aid shipping rules – sources” 29 June 2017 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-aid-exclusive/exclusive-white-house-weighs-tightening-u-s-food-aid-shipping-rules-sources-idUSKBN19K33S>

Critics argue the order would create few, if any, jobs. Food aid is a very small percentage of the worldwide sea cargo flow, while the security issue is moot as most cargo ships are too slow for use by the 21st century military.

No impact: Less than 1% of sailors would potentially be affected by food aid cargo preference reform

Erin Lentz, Stephanie Mercier and Christopher Barrett 2017 ([Christopher Barrett](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/christopher-barrett)is a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. [Erin Lentz](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/erin-lentz)is an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow. Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; former team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture ) Aug 2017 Food aid and assistance programs and the next Farm Bill <http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/files/papers/20170823%20AEI-foodaidpaper%20clean.pdf>

The recent GAO (2015) report estimated that in 2014 the number of qualified US mariners available for a surge fleet was nearly 55,000, based on information they received from the US Coast Guard. With respect to impacts on US mariners, Frank Kendall, at the time the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, asserted in a 2013 letter sent to Rep. Edward Royce (R, CA), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, that reforms to food aid programs that might result in a reduction in food aid shipments might affect only 8-11 US-flagged vessels, employing between 360 and 495 mariners (Kendall 2013). Consequently, less than one percent of the total pool of 55,000 mariners would even potentially be affected by a reduction in food aid shipments subject to cargo preference restrictions, either because commodity food aid shipments sourced from the United States declined overall or due to relaxation of the cargo preference requirement.

Food aid cargo preference is not essential to maintaining US military capacity

Dr. Stephanie Mercier and Dr. Vincent Smith 2015 (Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; served as team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Smith – PhD economics; Professor of Economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University) 28 Sept 2015 Military readiness and food aid cargo preference: Many costs and few benefits <https://www.aei.org/publication/military-readiness-and-food-aid-cargo-preference-many-costs-and-few-benefits/> (Brackets added)

The main political rationale for preserving CPFA [Cargo Preference for Food Aid] has been, and continues to be, the assertion that maintaining a viable civilian US-flagged, oceangoing fleet is essential to the US government’s ability to undertake military engagements overseas, especially if supplies and manpower need to be transported to multiple destinations. In the last five years, several economic studies have rigorously evaluated this assertion and have all concluded that the evidence does not support the claim that CPFA is essential to maintaining US government capacity to undertake military engagements overseas. The analyses conducted for this paper lead to similar conclusions.

Dept. of Defense and Dept. of Homeland Security agree: Cargo preference doesn’t help military readiness

Erin Lentz, Stephanie Mercier and Christopher Barrett 2017 ([Christopher Barrett](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/christopher-barrett)is a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. [Erin Lentz](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/erin-lentz)is an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow. Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; former team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture ) Aug 2017 Food aid and assistance programs and the next Farm Bill <http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/files/papers/20170823%20AEI-foodaidpaper%20clean.pdf>

First, the special interests served by cargo preference claim cargo preference advances military readiness. But, as described above, that myth has been conclusively rebutted by multiple recent rigorously conducted studies that find the overwhelming majority of the agricultural cargo preference fleet is out-of-date and/or fails to satisfy the DOD standards for militarily usefulness (Bageant et al. 2010; GAO 2015; Mercier and Smith 2015; Thomas and Ferris 2015). The Departments of Defense and Homeland Security’s clear support in recent years for food aid reforms indicate that cargo preference makes no important contribution to military readiness (US Undersecretary of Defense 2013; US Department of Homeland Security 2014).

Food aid cargo ships are too old and fail to meet military requirements: No impact on military preparedness

Dr. Vincent H. Smith 2015 (Professor of Economics, Montana State University) American Food Aid: Why Reform Matters April 15, 2015 statement before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/download/smith-testimony-04-14-15>

Cargo preference for food aid does little or nothing to increase the ability of the private companies that form the US Maritime Service to provide services to the Department of Defense (DoD) in time of a major war. That is, applying cargo preference requirements to food aid shipments has no effective impact on the military preparedness of the United States. Two relatively recent detailed analysis of registration (Bageant, Barrett and Lentz, 2010; George mason University, 2015) have concluded that the overwhelming majority of US flagged ships approved for transporting foreign aid under the cargo preference mandate do not meet the criteria established by the Department of Defense for a mercantile ship to be viable for military purposes (only 17 of 61 ships appeared to meet the DoD criteria in 2006). Tellingly, most of the ships fail on to meet the DoD criteria on two important grounds: they are too old and they cannot be readily used as roll-on/roll off or liner container ships (they are bulk carriers or tankers) (Button et al, 2015).

There’s never been any assessment of sealift reserve capability and there’s never been a need for it in any situation

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear (brackets added) <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

CPFA’s [Cargo Preference for Food Aid] contribution to sealift capacity is uncertain, and available mariner supply has not been fully assessed. While CPFA has ensured that a portion of U.S.-flag vessels carry some food aid cargo, the number of vessels carrying food aid and U.S. mariners required to crew them has declined. The available pool of sealift capacity has always met all of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) requirements, without the full activation of the reserve sealift fleet. DOD’s most serious scenario would require a full and prolonged—a period longer than 6 months—activation of the reserve sealift fleet as well as the use of commercial vessels. The Maritime Administration (MARAD) estimated that 3,886 mariners would be needed to crew the reserve surge fleet and 9,148 mariners to crew commercial vessels. MARAD estimated that at least 1,378 additional mariners would be needed to satisfy a full and prolonged activation, including the crewing of commercial vessels. However, the actual number of U.S. mariners qualified and available to fulfill DOD’s most serious scenario is unknown and MARAD has not fully assessed the potential availability of all qualified mariners to satisfy a full and prolonged activation.

Plenty of sailors available in case of military emergency, and CPFA isn’t cost effective

Dr. Stephanie Mercier and Dr. Vincent Smith 2015 (Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; served as team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Smith – PhD economics; Professor of Economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University) 28 Sept 2015 Military readiness and food aid cargo preference: Many costs and few benefits <https://www.aei.org/publication/military-readiness-and-food-aid-cargo-preference-many-costs-and-few-benefits/>

An ample supply of trained mariners is available to man a surge fleet if a military emergency occurs, and CPFA is perhaps the least cost-effective option for ensuring that those mariners remain available.

A/T “Preserve US fleet and sailors’ jobs”

Very few jobs at stake, and the cost of those jobs means we take food away from 2 million people per year

**[Note: This card also provides quantification for how many people are affected by Harm 2B, the 3 programs cut per year due to excess cost.]**

Dr. Vincent H. Smith 2015 (Professor of Economics, Montana State University) American Food Aid: Why Reform Matters April 15, 2015 statement before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/download/smith-testimony-04-14-15> (brackets added; ACP is the same thing as CPFA)

Maritime interests have also made a related claim that ACP [Agricultural Cargo Preferences] creates many thousands of high paying jobs and has large effects on the US economy, both by expanding the US Merchant Marine service and increasing port service activities as well as through what are called “multiplier effects.” A recent US Department of Defense estimate of the direct marine service effects is that ACP increases the employment of sailors in the US Mercantile Marine fleet by between 375 and 495 jobs a year. Those jobs cost the taxpayer an estimated annual average additional outlay about $100,000 per job over an above what would be otherwise be spent to transport US food aid from the United States to the destinations where the food is needed. These are funds that annually, under the current food aid programs, are directly reallocated from providing food aid to over 2 million very poor people a year.

Cargo preference is just corporate welfare, and the needs of hungry kids should outweigh

Dr. Vincent H. Smith 2015 (Professor of Economics, Montana State University) American Food Aid: Why Reform Matters April 15, 2015 statement before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/download/smith-testimony-04-14-15>

The primary beneficiaries of the agricultural cargo preference mandate are the private shipping companies, whose vessels are approved for and used to carry food aid shipments under the ACP. Effectively, ACP is a straightforward and relatively wasteful form of corporate welfare that imposes substantial humanitarian costs on some of the poorest and most desperately in-need families and children in the world by reducing the effectiveness of US Food Aid programs.

Not working: US shipping capacity is declining under current rules

GAO 2015 (Government Accountability Office) 26 Aug 2015 INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE: Cargo Preference Increases Food Aid Shipping Costs, and Benefits Are Unclear <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/672181.pdf>

Sealift capability provided by U.S.-flag vessels, including those carrying food aid, has declined. From 2005 to 2014, the number of vessels in the overall oceangoing U.S.-flag fleet declined about 23 percent, from 231 to 179 vessels. In April 2015, MARAD reported that the decrease in available government cargo is the most significant factor contributing to the loss of U.S.-flag vessels. The majority of the decline has been in DOD cargo, the largest source of preference cargo. DOD cargo accounted for approximately three-quarters of preference cargo in 2013. Food aid shipments have also declined. From 2005 to 2013, the amount of U.S. food aid commodities purchased and shipped from the United States by the U.S. government—and therefore subject to cargo preference—declined by 66 percent and the number of U.S.-flag vessels carrying food aid declined by more than 40 percent, from 89 to 53. The number of vessels carrying food aid further declined to 38 in 2014 (see fig. 4).

No jobs were lost when cargo preference was cut from 75% to 50% in 2012

Erin Lentz, Stephanie Mercier and Christopher Barrett 2017 ([Barrett](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/christopher-barrett)is a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. [Lentz](https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/erin-lentz)is an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow. Mercier - PhD agricultural economics; former team leader for the Trade Policy and Programs area of the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture) Aug 2017 Food aid and assistance programs and the next Farm Bill <http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/files/papers/20170823%20AEI-foodaidpaper%20clean.pdf>

Advocates of cargo preference also advance claims that cargo preference supports employment for trained mariners who might need to be deployed for operating ships carrying military cargo. The 2012 reforms that reduced food aid cargo preference coverage from 75 percent to 50 percent do not appear to have led to a single vessel ceasing ocean freight service nor to the loss of any mariner jobs.

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