

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1803**

July 7, 2021

Ms. Lisa Peterson  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

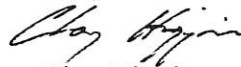
Acting Assistant Secretary Peterson,

Though the geopolitical situation in Haiti has been difficult for many years, further complicated by the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and natural disasters, I am writing to you to express my sincere concern over the state of unrest and the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Haiti. In late June, the U.S. Embassy in Haiti tweeted, "2020 saw 234 kidnappings and over 1,380 murders in #Haiti, and this violence has accelerated in 2021. We call on leaders in all sectors to act to stop this violence and for the government to protect the Haitian people."

In addition to Haiti being a close neighbor, they are also an important trading partner. My District is one of the top rice-growing Districts in the nation, and Louisiana is one of the top states for U.S. rice production. We also have several rice mills that process and ship rice throughout our country and to more than 100 markets around the world. Haiti is the top market for U.S.-grown milled rice and has been a loyal and growing market for many years, and the people of Haiti have a strong demand for our product. In recent years, we have shipped about 450,000 metric tons of rice valued at more than \$200 million to Haiti annually. Unfortunately, the unrest has made unloading rice shipments in Haiti difficult and dangerous. Because of the value of rice as a staple food in Haiti, shipments are prioritized as targets by local gangs and even hired, armed security is unable to prevent theft. These armed robberies often result in the shipment not being delivered to its intended destination.

While the continued theft of U.S. rice shipments causes export market and safety concerns, I am worried that this will further increase food insecurity in Haiti. As you and your staff throughout the Department know, food insecurity is the number one driver of conflict and violence. I ask your help in working with the United Nations to intervene in Haiti and establish peace, or at the very least, better secure the delivery of all critical food inland to the people of Haiti. Thank you for your service to our country and your attention to this important issue.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins,  
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary Antony Blinken, U.S. Department of State  
Secretary Tom Vilsack, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
The Honorable Michele Sison, U.S. Ambassador to Haiti  
Mr. Fred Giles – Agricultural Counselor, Foreign Agricultural Service, Haiti