

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 5, 2017

Mr. Wade Warren
Acting Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20523-0001

Dear Acting Administrator Warren:

We are writing in support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to extend the authorization of the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA), which expires on June 10, 2017.

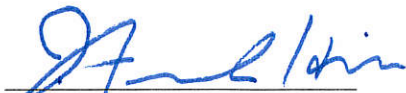
VEGA was created nearly 13 years ago when USAID decided that incorporating skilled American volunteers into economic growth programs would become a priority. USAID called for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to respond to an issuance of a Leader with Associate Award (LWA), and, in response, a small group of NGOs formed VEGA. This initiative, now consisting of a consortium of 29 NGOs, provides USAID field missions with adaptable and effective funding mechanisms to spur economic growth in developing countries through the use of skilled volunteers.

The LWA mechanism has allowed USAID to implement 58 programs in 46 countries in a quick and cost-effective manner. In recent testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, VEGA estimated it saved more than \$31 million in taxpayer dollars and nearly doubled the program value. These savings and completed projects would have not been possible without VEGA.

The authority for this initiative was extended three years ago and its funding ceiling was increased by then USAID Administrator, Raj Shah, and much of the same rationale for that extension remains relevant today. VEGA is valuable to the U.S. taxpayer, to USAID field missions, and to meeting U.S. foreign assistance objectives. Further, funding for VEGA is not an additional appropriation, and during a time of uncertain budget conditions, continuing successful foreign assistance programs that deliver real savings to the U.S. taxpayer should be a priority. Without an immediate extension of VEGA, USAID field missions will be left without this flexible, efficient, and effective funding mechanism.

We respectfully ask that you use your authority to extend this program until a new Administrator is in place at USAID so that VEGA can continue to serve U.S. foreign assistance objectives around the world.

Sincerely,



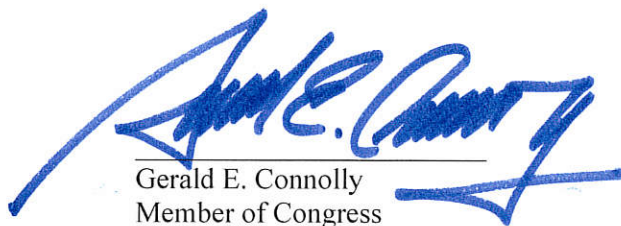
French Hill
Member of Congress



David Cicilline
Member of Congress



Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
Member of Congress



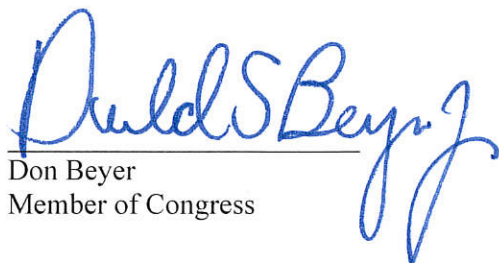
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Don Beyer
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart
Member of Congress