

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2022

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write to express support for the State of Florida's request that you issue a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Disaster Declaration for counties impacted by freezing temperatures on January 29 through January 31, 2022. We further ask that, in accordance with the State's request, any and all support under the Farm Service Agency and other USDA programs be made available to impacted farmers.

As you know, from January 29 through January 31, areas of Central and South Florida saw temperatures plunge to their lowest in more than a decade. This record-breaking drop and subsequent, prolonged freeze, damaged crops in areas across the state. In response to this sudden and historic freeze, Governor DeSantis issued an executive order declaring a state of emergency in thirty counties across Florida. The order will allow assistance to all impacted counties to ensure the swift movement of emergency supplies, personnel, and agricultural goods.

Agriculture makes up an important piece of Florida's economy and global exports. Florida's agricultural industry generated an estimated \$7.8 billion in 2019 from a variety of crops ranging from citrus to commodities to livestock. Yet, this hard freeze, following years of natural disasters and abnormally heavy rainfall, have threatened the resilience of our state's producers. What's more, this freeze occurred at a critical time in the year for the development of our state's crops. Initial reports have shown significant losses of fruit and vegetable crops and our state's citrus producers have also recorded potentially serious damage. We appreciate the Governor's attention to assisting our agriculture industry at this critical moment, but it cannot be done alone. USDA's disaster programs are essential to ensure our producers can fully recover from this unprecedented freeze.

We respectfully ask that you urgently review and respond to the State of Florida's request and issue a Disaster Declaration, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, for all counties impacted by the freezing temperatures.

Sincerely,



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Val B. Demings
Member of Congress



John Rutherford
Member of Congress



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress