

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 4, 2026

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

We write in support of the Governor of Virginia's request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretarial Disaster Designation for all counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia due to the severe freeze events that impacted crops across the state in early 2026. Below-freezing temperatures caused significant damage to crops, forests, and nurseries in Virginia and have placed considerable financial strain on farmers, growers, and rural communities.

Agriculture remains Virginia's largest private-sector industry, while forestry ranks among the Commonwealth's leading economic drivers. Together, these industries support thousands of jobs and serve as the backbone of rural communities throughout Virginia. The freeze events occurred during a critical stage of crop development, damaging sensitive buds, blossoms, and emerging plants. As a result, producers across Virginia experienced substantial losses in key commodities, including peaches, apples, wine grapes, early-season vegetables, wheat, and newly emerged corn.

According to assessments from Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), crop losses from these freeze events exceed the 30 percent disaster trigger necessary for disaster assistance, with some producers anticipating a complete crop failure. Preliminary estimates place direct agricultural losses between \$32.4 million and \$105.3 million, with total economic impact expected to grow as secondary losses, reduced future income, and drought conditions continue to develop.

We respectfully request a Secretarial Disaster Designation be issued for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Virginia's farmers and foresters are resilient, but extraordinary weather events such as these create challenges beyond the ability of many operations to absorb on their own.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to supporting American agriculture and the rural communities that sustain our nation.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman (VA-01)
Member of Congress



Jen Kiggans (VA-02)
Member of Congress



John J. McGuire III (VA-05)
Member of Congress



Ben Cline (VA-06)
Member of Congress



H. Morgan Griffith (VA-09)
Member of Congress

Cc: Governor Abigail Spanberger
Katie K. Frazier, Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry
Charles Green, Commissioner of Agriculture
Wilmer S. Stoneman, USDA FSA Virginia State Director