

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2022

House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger,

As members of the Florida Congressional delegation representing one of the largest citrus producing states in the country, we write today to express the urgent need for disaster aid for the Florida citrus industry.

On September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian made landfall in Southwest Florida. The storm moved slowly northeast through the middle of the state and left a path of destruction and devastation in its wake. Many of our largest citrus producing counties saw significant impacts from the storm, both from the expected winds and the unexpected and unprecedented water levels.

The most recent damage assessment released by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services indicated more than 375,000 of the roughly 400,000 acres of Florida citrus were impacted by Hurricane Ian. This culminated in an estimated \$675.5 million dollars in preliminary damages to the industry. Subsequently, Hurricane Nicole also made landfall on the east coast of Florida on November 10, 2022, inflicting more damages, which included additional fruit drop and standing water.

Citrus is one of Florida's signature crops already facing a number of challenges including a trade imbalance from international entities, increased disease pressure, and loss of acreage over the past decade. Yet the industry remains a strong economic force in the state, providing more than 33,000 jobs and an annual economic impact of more than \$6.67 billion. Citrus forms the backbone of many rural communities throughout the state's interior not only through processing plants and packinghouses but ancillary businesses such as banks, truck dealerships, plant nutrition companies, restaurants, and equipment stores. The industry also provides extensive environmental benefits such as the production of 16.7 tons of oxygen a year, valuable aquifer recharge, and wildlife habitat.

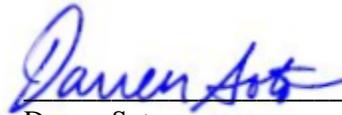
A thriving citrus industry remains critical for Florida's economy, environment, and way of life. Growers are proud to produce products that support the economy, taste good and are good for you. Despite immense challenges, the industry has a long, bright future ahead of it, but growers require assistance to help recover from these recent storms.

A timely and robust disaster supplemental appropriation is critically needed to respond to the devastation inflicted upon Florida's agriculture sector and one of its signature crops, citrus. Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to working with you to provide much-needed relief to Florida's citrus industry.

Sincerely,



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



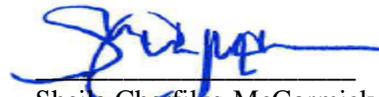
Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



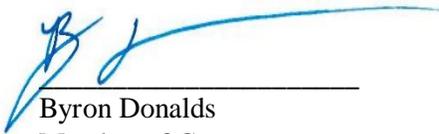
Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



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