

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 4, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Rollins,

We write to you as the Maryland Congressional Delegation to urge you to expeditiously approve the request from Maryland Governor Wes Moore to issue a Secretarial Disaster Designation for Maryland counties impacted by the April 21, 2026 freeze and frost event that has severely damaged Maryland crops, and to make emergency financial assistance available to impacted farmers as quickly as possible, pursuant to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 301, 7 U.S.C. 1961 and 1989, and implemented by 7 CFR §759.

Preliminary reports indicate major losses at Maryland farms, especially among specialty crops, with orchards and vineyards seeing some of the worst impacts. Several Maryland jurisdictions have reported losses as high as 99% for peach crops and 94% for apple crops.¹ Additionally, a survey conducted by the Maryland Farm Bureau indicates that impacted farmers are expecting an average crop loss of 67.5%, with some farmers reporting near total losses of their 2026 crops, which far exceeds the 30% threshold required for a Secretarial disaster declaration.² This is a devastating loss for Maryland farmers, many of whom will not be able to recover their sunk costs from this growing season. These same farmers will still need to continue to invest in maintaining their farms and planning for next season; doing so without the expected revenue from this season's sales to offset those costs could threaten these farms' financial viability.

Agriculture is a major economic driver in Maryland and the backbone of Maryland's rural communities, representing the single largest commercial industry in the state with 12,600 farms that support 350,000 jobs and generate \$8 billion in annual economic value.³ Maryland is also a hub for small farming, with the majority of Maryland farms consisting of less than 50 acres of land.⁴ Small farms are more vulnerable to major shocks like this severe cold event, and farms

¹ Governor Wes Moore Letter to USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, May 27, 2026, "Formal Request for Secretarial Disaster Designation – April 2026 Freeze Event," Office of the Governor of Maryland, <https://governor.maryland.gov/media/916>.

² Maryland Farm Bureau President James K. Raley Letter to USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, May 14, 2026, Maryland Farm Bureau, https://drive.google.com/file/d/15STKS0cFFLg-1FfJAYGeb5FDnqgi_Ok0/view.

³ "Maryland at a Glance, Agriculture," *Maryland Manual On-Line*, Maryland State Archives, <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/agri.html>.

⁴ Prem B. Bhandari, "Agritourism: What to Know about Agritourism in Maryland," Fact Sheet 02.001 (University of Maryland Eastern Shore Extension, January 2025), https://www.wcp.umes.edu/extension/wp-content/uploads/sites/139/2025/04/UMES_EXT_Factsheet_Agritourism_in_MD_JAN25_v7.pdf.

across the state have already been struggling due to rising input costs and challenging economic conditions, underscoring the urgent need for USDA to grant a disaster declaration and to make funding available for Maryland farmers who have suffered major crop losses.

We stand ready to work with you to support Maryland farmers faced with recovering from major financial losses due to this extreme weather event. It is critical that aid be delivered in time to allow farmers to recover and prepare for the next growing season. Thank you for your urgent attention to this important manner.

Sincerely,



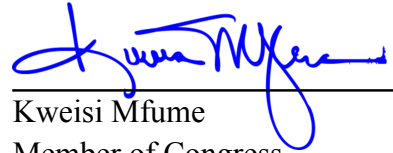
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



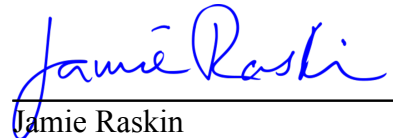
Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress




Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



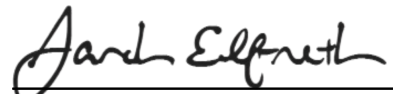
Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress



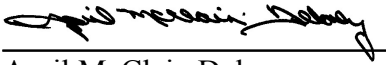
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



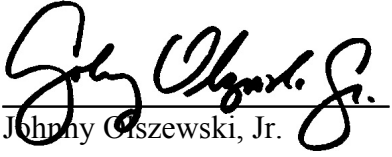
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