

June 26th, 2023

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

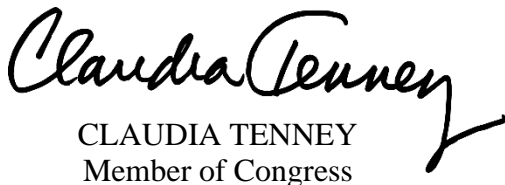
Dear Secretary Vilsack,

Our Upstate New York grape, apple, and stone fruit growers are suffering after significant damage from a recent extended frost event. These producers are a critical part of our Upstate economy, and their recent losses risk having a negative impact on our region's agricultural output and important tourism industry. In response, we ask the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prepare and quickly approve any disaster declaration requested by New York State.

In the early hours of May 18, 2023, large portions of New York's Finger Lakes and Hudson Valley regions experienced a prolonged frost event.¹ This resulted in significant crop loss and long-term damage to grape vines and fruit trees. Due to a warm April, with temperatures reaching into the 80s for multiple days, many grape vines and fruit trees had exited their winter dormancy period early, leaving them vulnerable to colder temperatures. Of the affected vines and trees, many are now dead while others are damaged to the point where they must be replaced. An especially hard-hit area is the region around Keuka Lake and southern Seneca Lake, where there have been reports that many grape growers have seen a 50-90% loss of their vines. These losses are simply devastating.

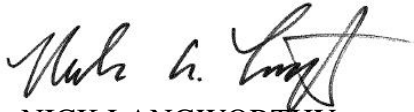
In the face of these very serious challenges, we ask that the USDA acts as quickly as it can to approve any disaster declaration requested by New York. It is vital that assistance to affected businesses be provided as quickly as possible. We look forward to working with you to ensure affected growers and producers can recover from this event.

Sincerely,


CLAUDIA TENNEY
Member of Congress


PATRICK K. RYAN
Member of Congress

¹ <https://www.winemag.com/2023/05/23/frost-destroys-new-york-wine-region/>



NICK LANGWORTHY
Member of Congress



ELISE STEFANIK
Member of Congress



MARCUS J. MOLINARO
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BRANDON WILLIAMS
Member of Congress