



Ned Lamont
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

May 25, 2023

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Subject: Request for a Secretarial Disaster Declaration

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

In accordance with 7 CFR 759, I request a Secretarial Disaster Designation for all counties in the State of Connecticut; Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New London, New Haven, Tolland, and Windham; due to the significant damage that occurred from the recent frost that impacted many crops across the state on May 18, 2023.

The early morning of May 18 recorded sub-freezing temperatures for extended periods of time across the state, with some farms recording temperatures in the mid to low 20° fahrenheit for up to five hours. Given that point in the growing season, an incredible amount of damage was done to many crops; including strawberries, blueberries, grapes, peaches, cherries, pears, apples, Christmas trees, and other nursery crops.

According to loss reports shared by the USDA Farm Service Agency Connecticut State Office, producers are already reporting significant crop losses nearing the 30% disaster trigger as a result of the freezing temperature. Additional losses will ensue as crops will increasingly show damage for several weeks post-freeze.

A Secretarial designation will open the availability of low-interest USDA Farm Service Agency emergency loans for eligible producers in the approved counties.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. If your staff have any questions or require additional information or documentation, please contact Connecticut's Commissioner of Agriculture, Bryan Hurlburt at bryan.hurlburt@ct.gov or at (860) 713-2501.

Sincerely,

Ned Lamont
Governor