



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Wes Moore

May 27, 2026

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

RE: Formal Request for Secretarial Disaster Designation – April 2026 Freeze Event

Dear Secretary Rollins:

Pursuant to 7 CFR § 759, I formally request a Secretarial Disaster Designation for the Maryland counties impacted by the devastating freeze and frost event that occurred on April 21, 2026. This request is supported by disaster assessment data from the Maryland Farm Service Agency (FSA) and underscores the critical need for federal intervention to sustain our state's leading commercial industry.

The early morning hours of April 21, 2026 brought a severe temperature drop across the region, resulting in catastrophic damage to Maryland's specialty crops—particularly perennial fruit trees and viticulture. Preliminary reports from the Maryland FSA office indicate historic losses, including 94% of the apple crop, 99% of the peach crop, and 98% of the barley crop in several jurisdictions. Furthermore, the Maryland Wineries Association (MWA) reports that 36% of grape acreage suffered total loss, with an estimated \$24.4 million deficit in projected wine sales for the 2026 vintage.

Despite the absence of a harvestable crop, our producers face the compounding burden of sunk costs. Maintaining the health of perennial vines and trees requires ongoing labor and maintenance—estimated at \$4.2 million for the state's grape crop alone—which growers must now absorb without the offset of annual revenue.

100 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21404
(410) 974-3400
TTY Users Call via MD Relay
governor.maryland.gov

The Honorable Brooke Rollins

May 27, 2026

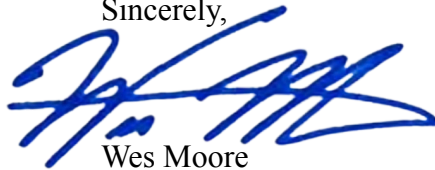
Page 2

Maryland's farmers are resilient, but the scale of this climate event exceeds local and state recovery capacities. As highlighted by recent Maryland Farm Bureau surveys, our agricultural community remains vulnerable to extreme weather volatility and requires enhanced financial accessibility to maintain long-term viability. My administration has worked closely with Maryland FSA State Executive Director George Turner to monitor these assessments, and the data confirms that losses far exceed the 30 percent threshold required for a Secretarial Disaster Declaration.

I urge the Department to expedite this designation to ensure that emergency loans and supplemental relief programs are made available to our producers without delay. Swift action is essential to provide the stability Maryland's farmers need to recover from this catastrophe and prepare for the next growing season.

Thank you for your dedicated leadership and your continued support of Maryland's agricultural producers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wes Moore', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Wes Moore
Governor