

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write today to urge you to quickly approve the request made by Governor Polis for a Secretarial Disaster Declaration for Colorado's Western Slope counties impacted by the freeze event on April 13, 2020.

Last week, Western Colorado was devastated by a major freeze that impacted close to, if not the entirety, of the area's fruit crop. This is one of the worst freezes this area of Colorado has seen since 1999. A conservative estimate of the impact of the freeze is a \$50 million economic loss to the communities in Western Colorado.

At the end of March, Colorado had reports that peach growers on the Western Slope were expecting an all-time bumper crop. Until now, fruit crops in Colorado had not experienced any damaging hail, winds, or freezes. Farmers in Colorado were excited about the prospects of a great crop year, perhaps the best in several decades. Instead, farmers are now reeling from this devastating freeze, and relief is needed.

During an already disruptive time in our economy, additional stresses and disruptions in the food supply cannot be taken lightly. While Colorado farmers work to assess the true impact and damage from the freeze, initial reports show that at least half of the produce crop on the Western Slope of Colorado has been lost at the best, and total crop loss is a distinct possibility. We ask for your support of Colorado farmers as they work through the fallout of this weather event, and respectfully urge you to grant the request of Governor Polis to issue a Secretarial Disaster Declaration.

We appreciate your continued work and support for our nation's producers. Thank you for your consideration of the Governor's disaster designation request for Colorado.

Sincerely,



Cory Gardner  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress