

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2016

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration, &
Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration, &
Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt & Ranking Member Farr,

On August 26, 2015, several Oriental Fruit Flies were found in South Miami-Dade County, Florida. The discovery of this pest was cause for serious concern, as the very destructive Oriental Fruit Fly has been known to infest over 430 kinds of fruits and vegetables, including many crops grown in Florida like avocado, mango, tomato, squash, and peppers. Unlike other states, Florida's farm production provides essential produce during, and immediately following, each winter season, and the spread of this pest would have a devastating impact on our nation's food supply.

As determined by federal and state officials, on October 1, 2015, a quarantine was established to cover 98 square-miles in South Miami-Dade County, which lasted until February 13, 2016. Through the dedicated work of officials at USDA and Florida Department of Agriculture, there have been no new discoveries of Flies since October 10, 2015, and the quarantine has been lifted.

While the quarantine was absolutely necessary to ensure complete eradication of the Fly, it had a devastating effect on the farmers located in the designated area. They were no longer be able to bring their crop to market or have refrained from even planting in the first place this season. The crops grown year-round and the agriculture industry in Florida contribute \$120 billion to the state's economy, but those farmers impacted in the affected area will face economic hardships for years to come.

To address this issue, we respectfully request your inclusion of the following Committee Report language to accompany the FY17 Agriculture Appropriations bill:

“The Committee strongly urges the Farm Service Agency to make funds available to those farmers who were negatively impacted by an Oriental Fruit Fly quarantine from October 2015-February 2016. The farmers, who were unable to bring their crop to market, sustained devastating losses, although the quarantine was necessary and successful in eradicating the Oriental Fruit Fly pest. Because Crop Insurance or similar products do not apply in instances of a state or federal declared quarantines, the impacted farmers are in dire need of relief. The Committee believes it is within the FSA purview to make funds available to the impacted farmers”.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Adam Wolf in Rep. Curbelo’s office or Jessie Andrews in Rep. Graham’s office.

Sincerely,



Carlos Curbelo (FL-26)
Member of Congress



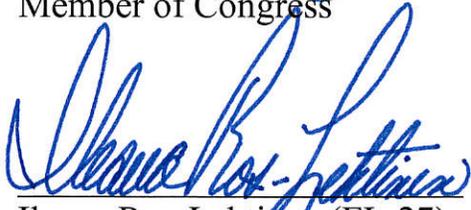
Gwen Graham (FL-02)
Member of Congress



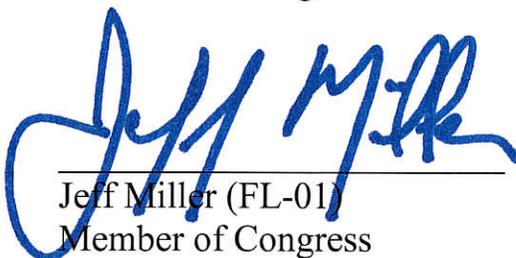
Patrick E. Murphy (FL-18)
Member of Congress



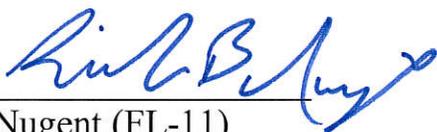
Frederica S. Wilson (FL-24)
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-27)
Member of Congress



Jeff Miller (FL-01)
Member of Congress



Richard Nugent (FL-11)
Member of Congress