

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 6, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Colleagues,

We write to request an agriculture supplemental disaster package that meets the needs of farmers and ranchers in Georgia and Florida following Hurricanes Helene and Milton, as well as natural disasters occurring in 2023 and 2024.

As you are aware, both of our states have been heavily impacted by natural disasters over the last two years, leaving farmers and ranchers with decimated crops and wrangled infrastructure. Most recently, Georgia's cotton, pecan, and timber crops were flattened by Hurricane Helene, and Florida's citrus and vegetable crops were devastated after Hurricane Milton.

As these storms blew through our states, they left billions of dollars in damage in their wake. Georgia's Department of Agriculture estimates producers will need \$7.15 billion to make up for damage caused by recent disasters,<sup>1</sup> while Florida's Department of Agriculture puts damage estimates between \$500 and \$800 million for Hurricane Helene and \$1.5 and \$2.5 billion just for Hurricane Milton.<sup>2</sup> As you negotiate a disaster supplemental package, we urge you to include sufficient funding to meet the needs of producers in our states. We also ask that you consider structuring a portion of this funding in the form of state block grants to ensure our states' Departments of Agriculture flexibility in efforts to assist our farmers and ranchers, including our specialty crop and timber producers.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Governor Brian Kemp to Congressional Appropriations Leaders (Nov. 19, 2024), <https://georgiarecorder.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Helene-Congressional-Appropriations-Letter-and-Attachment-11.19.24.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Commissioner Wilton Simpson, *Preliminary Estimates of Damage to Florida Agriculture From Hurricane Milton*, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Oct. 2024), <https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/117391/file/preliminary-hurricane-milton-impact-report.pdf>.

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Georgia and Florida farmers and ranchers are still reeling from the consequences of these storms, and we need to do all we can to help expedite their recovery efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Warnock" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Scott" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rick Scott  
United States Senator

Cc:

Majority Leader Schumer  
Minority Leader McConnell  
Chair Stabenow  
Ranking Member Boozman