

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0505

February 2, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to request your immediate attention to the freeze disaster in California that has recently impacted thousands of the State's farms and farm workers. We join Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in requesting you to immediately declare the affected communities federal disaster areas and urge you to deploy all necessary federal agencies to help farmers and displaced farm workers deal with the catastrophic impacts of this freeze.

Earlier this week, USDA Secretary Johanns declared an agricultural disaster to help assist farmers impacted by the freeze, as nearly every agricultural sector in California was hurt by abnormally cold temperatures. The freeze has already caused well over \$1 billion in documented crop damage, with the State's citrus industry, the largest in the nation, suffering \$800 million in losses.

The impact of this disaster has been equally as devastating to California's farm workers. State and county officials estimate that as many as 15,000 agricultural workers will be out of work for the next year. In cities and towns throughout the State, displaced workers and their families have depended on the kindness of local food banks, churches, and community centers to help them deal with the reality that there would be no work for months. With a Presidential declaration, we can help these workers deal with this crisis.

We urge you to immediately declare a major disaster in the 31 California counties impacted by the freeze. Your quick action will make thousands of California farmers and workers eligible for greatly needed Federal assistance. Please be assured we will do all we can in Congress to guarantee that the Federal government provides the necessary resources to our impacted citizens.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator