



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

November 18, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
361-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Moran, and Ranking Member Merkley:

As you negotiate the details of Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bills, I urge you to include \$7 million in funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Huanglongbing Multiagency Coordination (HLB-MAC) Group. This program provides critical resources to address citrus greening, a disease that has ravaged the citrus industry in Florida for the past decade.

The citrus industry provides more than Florida's iconic oranges—it is a \$9 billion economic driver that directly supports more than 64,000 jobs in the state. Nationwide, the citrus industry contributes nearly \$11 billion in revenue.

The President's budget request included \$7 million for the HLB-MAC Group. I support this funding level, which will help ensure that the citrus industry can explore every potential solution to keep infected trees in production as long as possible.

Florida's citrus industry is facing its lowest production level in 50 years, with an estimated harvest of approximately 80 million boxes for the 2015-2016 season. It is imperative that the HLB-MAC Group receive funding as we continue the search for a long-term cure for greening.

I appreciate your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,