

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

I write to express concern regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's decision to exclude nursery, mushroom, and floriculture crops from eligibility under the Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers (ASCF) Program and request that you modify the program so that these farmers are eligible to participate. I also request that you extend the deadline for filing acreage reports so that all specialty crop producers have an adequate opportunity to apply.

Nursery, mushroom, and floriculture farmers are a vital part of American agriculture. For more than two decades, federal statute has recognized these crops as specialty crops. These growers contribute significantly to local economies, support tens of thousands of jobs, and supply domestic and international markets with high-value agricultural products.

Like other specialty crop producers, indoor and ornamental growers are experiencing rising labor costs, escalating input expenses, trade disruptions, and ongoing market instability. Many operate on narrow margins and continue to recover from years of compounded economic strain. Without access to bridge assistance, viable family farms and businesses face the real risk of closure.

Excluding these producers from emergency relief leaves a substantial segment of American agriculture without the support intended to stabilize the broader farm economy.

I request that USDA modify the ASCF Program to ensure that nursery, mushroom, and floriculture farmers are eligible to participate, consistent with the longstanding statutory definition of specialty crops. Further, I urge you to reconsider the structure of the ASCF Program to more closely align with prior USDA programs for specialty crops that based payments on a grower's aggregate sales or revenue.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator