

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 18, 2024

Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

In accordance with 7 C.F.R. 759, I request a Secretarial Disaster Designation for the State of Vermont, including for Orange, Washington, Caledonia, Orleans, Essex, Lamoille, Chittenden, and Addison Counties.

On July 10, 2024—one year after the State of Vermont experienced historical flooding in July 2023—Vermont suffered devastating impacts from the remnants of Hurricane Beryl. The storm's torrential rains caused innumerable streams and rivers to flood towns, destroy roads and bridges, inundate farms and ruin crops. Many Vermont farms had not fully recovered from last year's destructive storms before they were again under water in the middle of Vermont's short growing season.

Vermont expects to submit a request to FEMA in the very near future for President Biden to declared a Major Disaster for Vermont.

It's too early to accurately quantify farm damages, but losses are extensive and catastrophic. Our farmers and agricultural producers will need help. Our most fertile farmland often lies in river valleys, and flood waters buried countless fields of corn, hay, vegetables, fruit, and pasture. We expect the flooding and related contamination to destroy large shares of farmers' produce and livestock feed. Vermont's growing season is limited and widespread crop losses in the mid-point of two successive seasons is tragic. Many crops cannot be replanted, and losses will not be recovered or effectively mitigated prior to our required early harvest. We expect the need for assistance to be acute.

A Secretarial designation will make financial assistance including low-interest USDA Farm Service Agency emergency loans available for eligible producers in the approved counties. Once again, we appreciate USDA's critical support and thank you for your Agency's work to mitigate the impact of recurring natural disasters on Vermont's farms. If your staff have any questions or require additional information or documentation, please contact Vermont's Secretary of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, Anson Tebbetts at anson.tebbetts@vermont.gov or at (802) 324-9850. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp

c: John D. E. Roberts, State Executive Director, FSA
Anson B. Tebbetts, Secretary/Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets