

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 14, 2015

Secretary Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

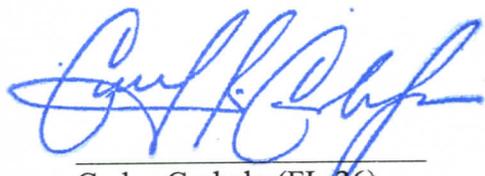
The purpose of our letter is to formally request the Department's immediate intervention in our efforts to help eradicate the Oriental Fruit Fly from its destructive infestation of our fruit and vegetable crops within South Florida. As you know, the Oriental Fruit Fly is one of the most destructive pests in the world. To date, it has attacked and decimated more than 450 fruit, nut and vegetable crops, including avocado, mango, tomato, squash, pepper, guava, and many other species. These crops are grown year-round throughout Florida, and serve as a vital economic engine to our \$120 billion agriculture industry. Unlike other states, Florida's farm production provides essential produce to most of the nation during, and immediately following, each winter season.

As required by law, the current infestation is now subject to quarantine, prohibiting the transport of almost every agricultural product grown in the affected areas. This development will have devastating effects to our agricultural community, and adversely impact our farmers, farm workers, truck drivers, and all allied businesses that depend on our annual harvests. Moreover, the Oriental Fruit Fly can be spread by the public when they bring or mail uninspected fruits, nuts, vegetables, or other host plants from foreign or domestic quarantine areas to uninfected areas of the United States. Although the USDA-APHIS, as well as the Florida Department of Agriculture and Miami-Dade County's Department of Consumer Services are tasked with dealing with the current crisis by providing safeguards to prevent the diseases' spread, they are limited in their resources.

It is of the utmost importance that the federal government act quickly to help eradicate this pest as rapidly as possible to prevent further destruction of our crops, and provide much-needed relief to our invaluable but delicate farming community. For these reasons, the Florida Congressional Delegation seeks your Department's complete support at this difficult time, and asks that it provide all the necessary assistance to help improve a most difficult situation for a significant number of Floridians. Additionally, we would greatly appreciate your efforts in keeping us informed of what emergency resources you will deploy in assisting us during the quarantine period, as well as when we can expect to enter the recovery phase.

We look forward to your prompt response to this most unfortunate and urgent situation.

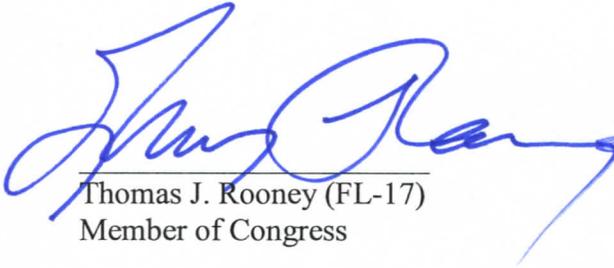
Sincerely,



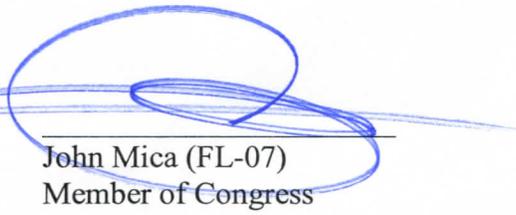
Carlos Curbelo (FL-26)
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25)
Member of Congress



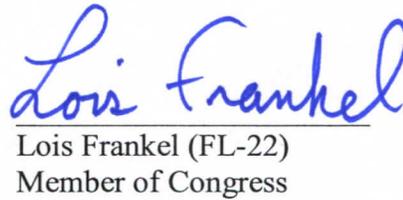
Thomas J. Rooney (FL-17)
Member of Congress



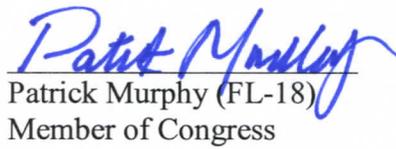
John Mica (FL-07)
Member of Congress



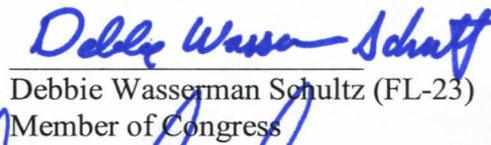
Gus Bilirakis (FL-12)
Member of Congress



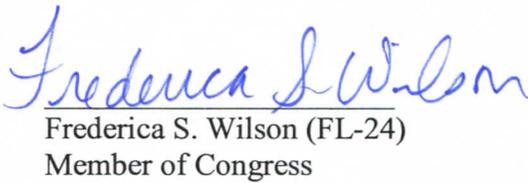
Lois Frankel (FL-22)
Member of Congress



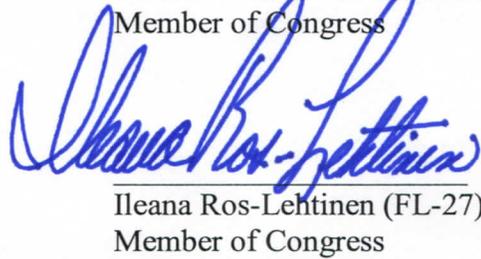
Patrick Murphy (FL-18)
Member of Congress



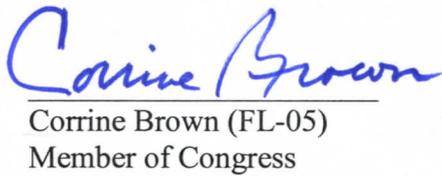
Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23)
Member of Congress



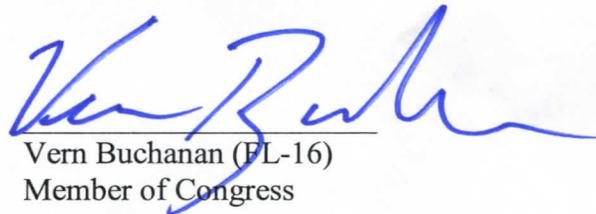
Frederica S. Wilson (FL-24)
Member of Congress



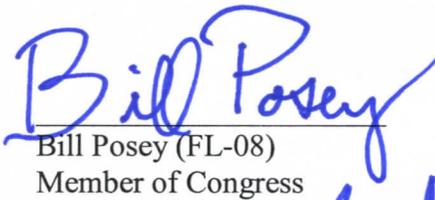
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-27)
Member of Congress



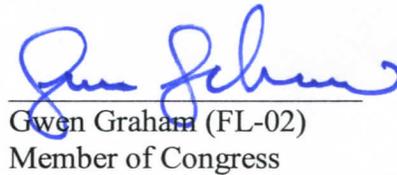
Corrine Brown (FL-05)
Member of Congress



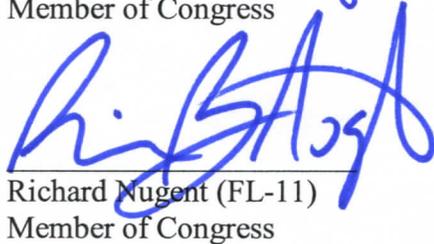
Vern Buchanan (FL-16)
Member of Congress



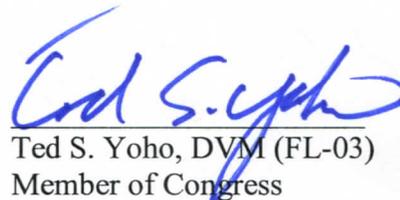
Bill Posey (FL-08)
Member of Congress



Gwen Graham (FL-02)
Member of Congress

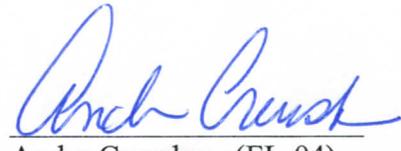


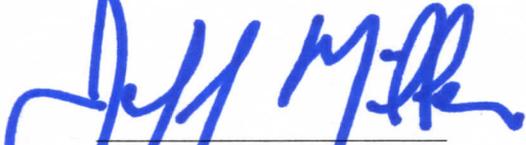
Richard Nugent (FL-11)
Member of Congress



Ted S. Yoho, DVM (FL-03)
Member of Congress


Alan Grayson (FL-09)
Member of Congress


Ander Crenshaw (FL-04)
Member of Congress


Jeff Miller (FL-01)
Member of Congress


Kathy Castor (FL-14)
Member of Congress