



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Calls for Federal Relief for Grape Industry

CATHARINE YOUNG June 22, 2009

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ALBANY - Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) today sent a letter to Governor David Paterson urging him to request a Federal disaster declaration for areas affected by an unseasonal frost that severely damaged vineyard crops in the Lake Erie Region. Sen. Young said the estimated crop loss to grape growers in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties ranges from 25 to 35 percent.

“This is a devastating blow to an industry that relies so heavily on Mother’ Nature’s cooperation,” said Senator Young. “The economic impact of this disaster extends well beyond the direct impact to farmers. Tourism, suppliers and local communities will feel the hit as well. The grape and wine industry has been a growing and powerful economic engine in this region and I urge Governor Paterson to call for

this needed relief.”

On the morning of May 18, 2009, temperatures in the Lake Erie Region dropped to between 25 degrees F and 29 degrees F affecting vineyards ranging from Erie County, PA all the way to Niagara County, NY.

“It was unexpected and all farmers could do was hold their breath in the hopes everything would turn out ok. Unfortunately, that didn’t happen and crops were destroyed. Now farmers are looking for any help they can get to recover from this tremendous blow.” said Sen. Young.

New York is the third largest wine producer in the United States and attracts over 4 million tourists annually. The total economic benefit to the state last year from New York grapes, grape juice and wine was \$3.4 billion.

Senator Young will be touring a local farm in her district on Saturday to assess the damage. The Fisk Farm in Dunkirk had damage done to 65 acres out of the 150 the farm owns and maintains.