



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Applauds Announcement of Federal Assistance for New York's Wine and Grape Farmers

CATHARINE YOUNG March 28, 2014

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ALBANY - Senator Catharine M. Young (R,C,I-Olean) applauded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) official disaster declaration in response to the damages suffered by grape vineyards during this winter's freezing cold temperatures. Many farmers are fearing vineyards have sustained the worst damages in 20 years and federal assistance will be necessary to cover the losses.

This winter grape growers worst fears were realized when the persistent freezing cold temperatures struck, threatening the life of grape vines and buds. The extended sub-zero temperatures caused severe damage to the plants that are the bedrock of New York's \$4.8 billion wine and grape industry. Hundred of farmers stand to lose up to 90 percent of their crops, according to an estimate from Cornell Cooperative Extension.

"Farmers continually face uncertainty due to weather conditions and are forced to contend with unpredictable cold snaps year in, year out. This important declaration will allow our grape farmers to receive the critical federal assistance that will allow them to recover from the losses and move forward. Because of the importance of the wine and grape industry to our entire economy, the damages they've suffered will have a far-reaching effect. It is critical that we vigorously support them during this difficult time," said Senator Young.

The USDA's official disaster declaration will allow hundreds of grape growers in 19 upstate counties, including Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany, to be eligible for federal emergency loans and assistance.

Farmers are now bracing themselves for this summer, when the full extent of the damages will be better known.

"I thank Congressman Tom Reed, and Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, for working to secure this declaration. I will stand with our dedicated grape farmers during these difficult days and make every effort to ensure they receive the help they need and our wine and grape industry comes back stronger than ever," said Senator Young.

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