



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

May 13, 2026

The Honorable Eddie Day Pashinski
212 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202121
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2121

The Honorable Elder Vogel
286 Main Capitol
P.O. Box 203047
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3047

The Honorable Dan Moul
416 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202091
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2091

The Honorable Judy Schwank
457 Main Capitol
P.O. Box 203011
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3011

Dear Chairman Pashinski, Chairman Vogel, Chairman Moul, and Chairwoman Schwank:

As you all know, Pennsylvania's farmers are facing a difficult year in 2026. After several weeks of unseasonably warm weather, freezing temperatures hit many regions of the state during the week of April 20th and caused substantial losses for many fruit growers in the Commonwealth. Since then, you, your staff, and many of your colleagues have been in touch with the Department of Agriculture as well as farmers in your districts to gather information and consider how to respond. To that end, just as we have done in the past, I am asking that we work together to provide emergency assistance for our farmers to help them through this difficult situation.

The losses sustained by our nation-leading fruit industry during this freeze event will have a devastating impact not only on our growers and farmers, but also on the broader Commonwealth economy. Assessments of the extent and impact of freezing temperatures on our state's specialty crops are ongoing, but industry and research partners estimate revenue losses of approximately \$150 to \$200 million for growers. From the lost commerce in sales to the impacts on our workforce, processors, and packers, the aftermath of this freeze event will ripple through communities at a time when our family farms and orchards cannot afford such a loss.

Historically, Pennsylvania farmers have survived difficult situations, in large part because of a steady partnership between the Administration and the chairs of the House and Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees. In 2022, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) returned to Pennsylvania at levels that hadn't been seen in decades. Rather than see our farmers struggle against impossible odds, you were instrumental in the effort to allocate

tens of millions of dollars to provide recovery funds that kept farms running despite devastating losses, which has been a lifeline for our poultry producers over the past four years. To date, we remain the only state that provides these resources for our farmers, which is why Pennsylvania's poultry industry has seen a strong recovery from HPAI impacts. Since 2022, the General Assembly has appropriated \$75 million to be used for the HPAI Recovery Grants and HPAI Rapid Response.

Let's do it again. Let's lead the nation in making sure that our farmers have the resources they need not only to overcome this crisis but also to thrive for generations. The HPAI recovery fund serves as an excellent model for how we can provide resources to those farmers impacted by the April freeze. Today, I've requested \$20 million in additional resources to the Appropriations Committees of all four caucuses to be included in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 enacted budget. This is one way that we could provide support in this time of need. Another option could be providing flexibility to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in how they can distribute existing resources to farmers who have suffered devastating losses.

Tragically, the on-farm impacts of this rapid thaw and freeze will be long in comparison to an HPAI case. In most cases, a farm impacted by HPAI can be back to full production (and income) in a matter of weeks. In contrast, as I toured Cherry Hill Orchards with Secretary Redding and Chairwoman Schwank, owner Corey McLeaf shared that they don't anticipate harvest income from these crops until fall 2027.

Just as I have called upon the USDA to take expedited action to assist our fruit growers, I am asking you to work alongside my Administration to do the same to help ensure our farmers survive through the next season.

Thank you all for your many years of being strong partners of Pennsylvania's farmers. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to continue to ensure a successful future for the Commonwealth's agriculture industry.

Sincerely,



Governor Josh Shapiro