

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

As Members of Congress from Florida representing one of the nation's most significant citrus producing states, we write to express our strong support for the advancement of technologies addressing Huanglongbing (HLB), including emerging citrus rootstock designed to improve disease tolerance and enable the development of trees resilient to HLB.

Since HLB was first detected in Florida in 2005, the state's citrus industry, our flagship crop, has experienced a sustained and significant decline. Citrus production has fallen by more than 90 percent from its peak in the 1990s, and total acreage has declined by hundreds of thousands of acres. These long-term losses have been compounded by catastrophic hurricanes and, most recently, a severe freeze that caused an estimated \$675 million in damage to citrus alone. Together, these pressures have significantly reduced the viability and productivity of citrus operations and limited growers' ability to reinvest in new plantings.

While tools such as Oxytetracycline injections have helped improve fruit set, increase yields and reduce fruit drop, these treatments primarily manage symptoms and do not address the underlying susceptibility of citrus trees to HLB. Citrus rootstock technologies developed using CRISPR are designed to improve disease tolerance by modifying or "turning off" the genetic traits that make citrus trees susceptible to HLB infection. Rather than introducing foreign traits, these approaches target the plant's existing biology to prevent the disease from taking hold and progressing.

These technologies represent one of the most promising paths forward by enabling the development of citrus trees with greater resilience to HLB. They can work in tandem with existing tools and provide the long-term durability needed to support commercial production. Florida growers are prepared to invest in over 2.5 million new trees this year alone, but that investment depends on regulatory certainty and access to solutions that can sustain productivity over time.

We urge the Environmental Protection Agency to move expeditiously to complete its review of this technology. Timely, science-based regulatory decisions will be critical to restoring confidence and ensuring the continued availability of nutritious, American-grown citrus. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working together to support Florida's citrus industry.

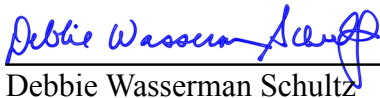
Sincerely,



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



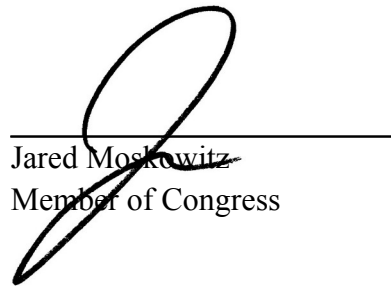
Laurel M. Lee
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Mike Haridopolos
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress