



Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Dennis A. Ross, Tom Rooney vote against delaying relief for Florida citrus

Washington - U.S. Reps. Dennis A. Ross (R-FL-15) and Tom Rooney (R-FL-17) issued the following statements addressing their votes against the continuing resolution today, which did not include the disaster relief supplemental. Although a disaster relief supplemental standalone passed during a later vote, the only way farmers would see disaster funding signed into law before Christmas was for it to be combined with the continuing resolution.

Rep. Ross said: "For months following Hurricane Irma, my colleagues and I fought to get Florida's citrus farmers the federal relief they needed. Already devastated by years of citrus greening, Florida's orange crop suffered \$760 million in damages due to Irma. This devastation has been made worse by the uncertainty of this legislative process, one in which we have been told repeatedly that 'help is on the way.' But despite our efforts, help is not yet on the way. Today's continuing resolution says to Florida farmers: You're on your own. It neglects Florida's citrus producers who needed something—anything—to help them stave off this devastation. I said that without including funding for agricultural relief, I could not support the continuing resolution. That funding has not materialized. Therefore, I could not support it. I stand with Florida's citrus farmers, and will continue fighting for them."

"Hurricane Irma hit Florida over three months ago and while it may not be in the news every day, this storm completely destroyed our state's iconic citrus industry," said Rep. Rooney. "My growers were already reeling from an incurable disease that was ravaging their groves before the storm, and when it hit – flooding groves and ripping the oranges straight off the trees – they lost virtually their entire harvest for next year. The situation my growers are facing gets worse literally every day. Fruit continues to drop, making it so they have very little if nothing at all to process into orange juice around harvest time, which isn't until early next year. Earlier this week, it certainly seemed as though this was the case. Unfortunately, in Washington, nothing is ever as it seems. The bill

released this week containing my request to help Florida’s farmers recover from the storm became a piece in a political and partisan game. The political reality is that the only way this disaster funding was going to be signed into law before Christmas was for it to be combined with the continuing resolution. The CR was the last train leaving the station. I could not, in good conscience, vote for a measure that does not include the disaster funding for the farmers, ranchers, and growers in Florida – doing anything else would be a betrayal of the trust they put in me to get them the help they need.”

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