

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 16, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

On December 4, 2015, Commissioner Adam Putnam of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services requested a FIFRA Section 18 specific exemption request on behalf of the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association for the use of antimicrobials in diseased citrus trees. I respectfully request you review the petition as expeditiously as possible.

Florida's citrus industry has long been a pillar of Florida's economy, not only responsible for millions of jobs and billions' worth of economic activity, but also serving as a proud symbol of our state. Huanglongbing (HLB), better known as greening, originated in China and has been devastating to Florida's workers and our economy. Since 2005, Florida has lost approximately 100,000 citrus acres. From 2006 to 2010, \$4.5 billion in revenue was lost due to the disease. This iconic industry, which represents \$9 billion, is in dire need of help. Just this month, the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture further downgraded Florida's orange-harvest outlook to 69 million boxes. Compared to the 2014 season of 96.8 million boxes, this year's crop will be the worst for Florida since 1963-1964.

With the latest downgrade in citrus yield, Florida citrus growers are in desperate need to fight this fast spreading disease. You will see that the petition shows that these products will aid in strengthening diseased trees, suppress greening, and potentially yield a better crop.

While I am confident that innovation stemming from our state and national research science programs will eventually find a cure to this disease, we should provide citrus farmers some degree of relief in dealing with this natural disaster. I respectfully request this petition receive the careful consideration it deserves, and with the urgency this time sensitive issue entails.

Respectfully,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator