WASHINGTON (29 April) – Today U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis (R-Fla.), representing Florida's 9th Congressional District, announced that federal disaster assistance is available for eligible farmers in the Tampa Bay Area.

Pasco County is among the 24 counties designated for natural disaster assistance by the U.S. Department of Agriculture due to crop losses caused by cold weather and freezing temperatures during January and February. Producers in both primary and contiguous counties such as Pinellas and Hillsborough are eligible to be considered for Farm Service Agency emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program.

"Florida's growers are a vital cog in the state's economy," said Bilirakis. "This federal assistance will ensure that growers in Florida can recover from the losses suffered earlier this year and continue to provide a safe and abundant food supply for consumers."

For more information, affected farmers should contact local Farm Service Agency offices.