

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2013

Mr. David Shipman
United States Department of Agriculture
Acting Administrator for the Agriculture Marketing Service
120 Independence Ave. SW, Room 228W
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Shipman,

We are contacting you to express our strong support for the Indian River Citrus League's recent request that USDA purchase Florida grapefruit juice for the Child Nutrition and Domestic Food Assistance Programs.

USDA's implementation of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act has made significant improvements to nutrition assistance programs in over 30 years. USDA has worked hand-in-hand with America's agriculture industry to fight hunger and support our rural economies. We applaud these efforts and ask your continued support of policies that promote healthy eating and support our nation's farmers.

The Florida citrus industry represents an important part of the state's economy; generating at least 75,000 jobs annually and contributing roughly \$4.5 billion in GDP. Since 2005, the industry has been hit hard by invasive pests and diseases. This year's grapefruit crop is experiencing extraordinary and unexpected droppage, and it is projected that droppage rates will exceed those of any other non-disaster season.

A robust citrus industry is critical to the state of Florida. Not only would a favorable decision by the Department in a grapefruit purchase ensure a healthy and nutritious product for those served through the Child Nutrition and Domestic Assistance Programs, but it would have the important benefit of helping stabilize a market that has been dramatically affected by the industry's poor conditions this year.

Please consider a grapefruit juice purchase to help stabilize this hard-hit industry for child nutrition and other food assistance programs. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Thomas J. Rooney
MEMBER OF CONGRESS