



**Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services**
Commissioner Wilton Simpson

Nov 8, 2023

Commissioner Wilton Simpson Applauds Florida Legislature for Prioritizing Hurricane Idalia Recovery Efforts for Agriculture

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson applauded the efforts of the Florida Legislature following the conclusion of a special session that prioritized Hurricane Idalia recovery relief for Florida’s agriculture industry:

“Florida’s agriculture industry sustained widespread damage from Hurricane Idalia, with an estimated loss of over \$447 million in crops, livestock, and infrastructure. Our state’s farmers, ranchers, and growers have a long road to recovery, but our agricultural industry is strong and resilient and will rebuild thanks to the unprecedented support from Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, House Speaker Paul Renner, Senator Corey Simon, Representative Jason Shoaf, and the entire Florida Legislature. Florida’s farmers will continue to do what they have always done – provide the safest, most abundant, and most affordable food supply in the nation – and I am proud to say that Florida has once again demonstrated their unwavering support to these hardworking individuals.”

[House Bill 1-C](#), passed during the 2023 Special Session C, provides the following critical support for Florida agriculture:

Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program

- \$75 million is appropriated to FDACS for the Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program for Hurricane Idalia.
- Established to make low-interest or interest-free loans, up to \$500,000 for an application period, to agriculture and aquaculture producers that have experienced damage or destruction from declared natural disasters.
- Loans may be used to restore, repair, or replace essential physical property or remove vegetative debris from essential physical property.

Timber Landowner Assistance Cost-Share Grant Program

- \$37.5 million appropriated to FDACS for the Timber Landowner Assistance Cost-Share Grant Program.
- Assists timber landowners through cost share grants in declared counties damaged from Hurricane Idalia with site preparation and tree planting on agricultural lands.
- Grants must be up to 75% of the costs for site preparation and tree planting costs with a maximum award of \$250,000.

According to the bill's timeline, and upon the signature of the bill, FDACS will open the application process for impacted producers within 60 days.

Additionally, to mitigate the impacts of recent disasters affecting the state, HB 1-C does the following:

- Provides that certain agricultural equipment that was unable to be used for 60 days due to Hurricane Idalia would be assessed at salvage value on the 2024 property tax roll.
- Grants refunds of sales tax paid on fencing materials used to repair or replace farm fences on lands classified as agriculture and were damaged due to Hurricane Idalia.
- Grants refunds of sales tax paid on building materials used to repair or replace nonresidential farm buildings damaged as a result of Hurricane Idalia.
- Grants refunds of motor fuel taxes used for agricultural shipments and debris removal after Hurricane Idalia.

For more information about [Commissioner Simpson](#) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, visit [FDACS.gov](https://fdacs.gov).

###