



THE FLORIDA SENATE

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SENATOR DON GAETZ

1st District

May 28, 2026

The Honorable Wilton Simpson
Commissioner
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

RE: Request for Investigation – Agricultural Aircraft Incident in East Milton, Santa Rosa County

Dear Commissioner Simpson:

On behalf of affected property owners in Santa Rosa County, I respectfully request that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services initiate a comprehensive investigation into agricultural aviation incidents that reportedly occurred on May 8 and May 20, 2026, in the East Milton area of Santa Rosa County, Florida.

According to information provided to our office, a crop-dusting helicopter, a contractor/vendor for Florida Power and Light, flew the power lines, and potentially through active power line infrastructure during aerial application operations in the East Milton area. Serious concerns have been raised regarding flight path, chemical dispersal practices, and resulting impacts on surrounding agricultural property and livestock.

Most concerning are reports of animal fatalities and suspected environmental contamination at farms and aviaries following the aerial spraying activity. Given these allegations and the potential implications for public safety, agricultural compliance, environmental protection, and aviation regulation, a full and transparent investigation may be warranted.

Accordingly, may we please request that FDACS undertake the following actions:

1. Confirm the relationship of Florida Power and Light to the company owning and operating the helicopter and ascertain whether the aerial flights were conducted under contract with FPL.

REPLY TO:

- 418 W. Garden Street, Fourth Floor, Pensacola, Florida 32502 (850) 595-1036
- Brackin Building, Third Floor, 302 N. Wilson Street, Crestview, Florida 32536
- 405 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5001

Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

BEN ALBRITTON
President of the Senate

JASON BRODEUR
President Pro Tempore

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2. Conduct a complete review of the helicopter's entire flight path and operational activity on May 20, 2026, including GPS records, flight logs, and aerial application data;
 - a) Please note attached flight path from May 20, 2026.
3. Determine the identity and licensing status of the aircraft operator, pilot, and associated agricultural aviation company involved in the operation;
4. Identify the chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, adjuvants, or other substances applied during the flight, including quantities, application rates, and compliance with state and federal regulations;
5. Assess whether any violations occurred concerning minimum safe operating procedures, aerial application regulations, or hazardous proximity to utility infrastructure and occupied agricultural property;
6. Investigate reports of animal deaths, contamination, crop damage, or environmental harm at properties potentially affected by drift or overspray;
7. Coordinate, where appropriate, with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), local utility providers, and any other relevant state or federal agencies;
8. Take regulatory action, where appropriate, against FPL and its aerial contractor/vendor.

I appreciate your consideration of my request and your attention to what many of your and my constituents believe is a serious matter. May I please request confirmation that FDACS has opened a formal investigation into the incidents which have been reported.

Respectfully,



Senator Don Gaetz

cc: Honorable Nathan Boyles
Honorable Alexis Lambert
Honorable Gabriella Passidomo Smith

Attachment: Flight Path from May 20, 2026

