August 6, 2026

Members of the Kentucky General Assembly, Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture:

We are writing in support of designating the pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) as the official State Native Fruit of Kentucky. Dr. Kirk W. Pomper, professor of horticulture and longtime leader of Kentucky State University's Pawpaw Research Program, is coordinating this effort.

The pawpaw is increasingly being appreciated as a native fruit that represents Kentucky's history, culture, and environment. My husband and I are farmers in Central Kentucky and have been growing pawpaw trees for fruit production on our farm for over 25 years. We grow many native fruit and nut trees and try to determine which species and cultivars can thrive here without constant pesticide applications. Pawpaw has great potential to be one of those crops.

There is a clear need to develop markets and specialty food products in order to make growing pawpaw fruit an economically viable specialty crop. This designation has the potential to bring recognition and support to research efforts to improve the cultivars available to growers and promote the use of the fruit.

We are in full support of the designation of the pawpaw as the State Native Fruit of Kentucky.

Thank you for your consideration.

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