

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 12, 2023

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write in support of the State of North Dakota's request for a presidential disaster declaration submitted by Governor Doug Burgum on January 10, 2023. The State of North Dakota was impacted by a severe winter weather storm that resulted in significant snowfall, ice, and heavy winds. The storm significantly impacted electrical infrastructure, left North Dakotans stranded, and shut down major highways for an extended period of time. We appreciate your consideration of the State's request for assistance.

From November 9, 2022, through November 11, 2022, North Dakota experienced rapid snowfall, substantial ice accumulation, and strong winds that destroyed power lines, impacted the integrity of electrical infrastructure, and made roadways not traversable for emergency services. The State of North Dakota had a mild fall with the November winter weather being the first winter storm to form in the State for the winter season. At the start of the storm, temperatures quickly decreased and once combined with incoming rain, the weather event quickly developed into a severe ice storm. As the weather pattern continued across the State, rapid—and in some counties, recording-breaking—snowfall occurred.

The counties of Dickey, Kidder, Mercer, Nelson, Ransom, Sargent, and Wells experienced winds over 40 miles an hour and snow accumulation of 24 to 30 inches within the three day period. Snow fell at a rate of three inches per hour, making it impossible for snow removal to keep pace, leaving people stranded in their homes and on roadways. Further, high winds created zero visibility conditions and prevented effective snow removal. These conditions, coupled with layers of ice under the snow, closed down major highways in the State for nearly five days, which in turn reduced access to emergency services and other critical services. Not only did ice impact roadways, but it also contributed to fallen trees and collapsed power lines, which left many North Dakotans without heat and power.

Prior to this winter storm, the State was in the process of hardening infrastructure and rebuilding following severe spring storms that created substantial flooding throughout North Dakota and resulted in approximately \$97 million in damages. These infrastructure improvements had an estimated completion of 18 to 24 months, meaning that North Dakota's infrastructure was already at a disadvantage when the winter storm took place. Unlocking federal assistance via a presidential disaster declaration is critical for North Dakota's recovery from both the spring and winter storms. The State is therefore requesting a presidential major disaster declaration for seven counties due to the winter storm, including the counties of Dickey, Kidder, Mercer, Nelson, Ransom, Sargent, and Wells, and is requesting snow assistance for the counties of Kidder, Mercer, Nelson, and Wells.

We support the State's request and urge you to approve a presidential disaster declaration as soon as possible so that the necessary federal resources can be made available to assist our State. Additionally, we urge you to designate North Dakota as a Public Assistance Managing State so that the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program may be implemented on a statewide basis to improve resiliency in the long-term. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



John Hoeven
U.S. Senator



Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator



Kelly Armstrong
U.S. Congressman