

SR-121, As Adopted by Senate, February 17, 2016

Senator Casperson offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 121.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to address freeze emergencies and their consequences by enacting legislation to define freeze emergencies as major disasters eligible for federal disaster relief and emergency assistance.

Whereas, During the 2013-14 winter season, much of the northern United States experienced extended extreme cold weather events. From frigid temperatures to heavy snowfall to arctic wind chills and the thaws that followed, severe winter weather was constant; and

Whereas, Michigan's Upper Peninsula experienced some of the worst weather that winter. Temperatures were routinely below the average daily recordings from 1981 to 2010, with subzero weather a regular occurrence. Because of the freezing temperatures, elevated numbers of water customers from communities throughout the Upper Peninsula needed to have their pipes thawed, including almost 25 percent of customers in the city of Negaunee. Roads, underground water mains, sewers, and hydrants were also damaged from the extreme cold weather. Damages amounted to over \$6.5 million in Marquette, Michigan, and more than \$19 million in the Upper Peninsula and three northern counties in the Lower Peninsula; and

Whereas, Under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, federal aid may be available to state and local governments facing a major disaster, which includes any natural catastrophe. Specifically listed are hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, fires, and snowstorms, among other events. Not expressly on the list are extreme cold weather events like freezes, prolonged freezes, and related thaws. It is long overdue that these events, which can be devastating, are added to the act's definition of major disasters. Severe freeze emergencies, like that experienced recently across the Upper Peninsula, deserve the attention of federal aid and relief efforts the same as any other disaster; and

Whereas, Congress is currently considering legislation on disaster assistance reform. This effort presents an opportunity for freeze emergencies to be addressed and for freezes, prolonged freezes, and related thaws to be added to the definition of major disaster; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to address freeze emergencies and their consequences by enacting legislation to define freeze emergencies as major disasters eligible for federal disaster relief and emergency assistance; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.