Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 18, 2022

President Joseph Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write in strong support of Governor Pete Ricketts's request for a Major Declaration of Disaster for Public Assistance for Nebraska due to a period of unstable weather on December 15, 2021 for the following counties: Adams, Buffalo, Burt, Cass, Cuming, Fillmore, Gage, Hamilton, Harlan, Jefferson, Johnson, Kearney, Nemaha, Nuckolls, Otoe, Pawnee, Platte, Polk, Richardson, Saline, Sarpy, Saunders, Thayer, Washington, and Webster. We also support the Governor's request for Hazard Mitigation statewide.

As a result of severe weather on December 15, later determined a derecho with wind damage extending more than 250 miles, numerous cities in Nebraska, including Beatrice, Bradshaw, Columbus, Fairbury, Geneva, Guide Rock, Syracuse, Tecumseh, Red Cloud, and Wymore, experienced damage to electrical distribution infrastructure, primarily to power poles and electrical lines, which left approximately 34,000 customers across the state without power. The high winds and ensuing weather also caused extensive damage to agriculture, including to center pivot irrigation systems, augers, and livestock, and the resulting losses are among the largest caused by a December storm in over 130 years. A preliminary damage assessment has estimated costs totaling $6,791,680.

This event comes after Nebraska suffered another federally declared disaster during the past 12 months, and while the state and small rural communities are still recovering from the largest disaster in our state's history, DR-4420, in March 2019. We ask that the federal government once again join in our state's recovery efforts and ensure prompt evaluation of this request. Our offices stand ready and willing to assist in any possible.

Sincerely,

Deb Fischer
United States Senator

Benjamin Sasse
United States Senator

Jeff Fortenberry
United States Representative

Don Bacon
United States Representative



Adrian Smith
United States Representative