STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 48th Legislature (2002)

SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION 56

By: Muegge of the Senate

and

Pope (Clay) of the House

AS INTRODUCED

A Concurrent Resolution finding the winter ice storm that hit the state to be of such magnitude that state and local governments are unable to match federal funds; requesting the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to fund 100% of Category A and B storm-related damage; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, approximately a year after what Oklahomans thought was the worst ice storm of the century, a second powerful ice storm crippled the northwestern half of the state. Accumulations of ice snapped power lines and telephone poles, leaving entire cities and towns without electricity. The storm, which began as an icy mist in the early morning hours of Wednesday, January 30, 2002, resulted in still uncalculated damage to businesses, public buildings and private residences. Public entities and private nonprofit organizations were stretched past their limits to provide support and comfort. Individual volunteers demonstrated the Spirit of Oklahoma by aiding and assisting neighbors and strangers, families and friends, and those in need no matter where or who they might be; and

WHEREAS, a total of 45 counties in the northwest portion of the state have been designated as disaster areas making individual residents eligible for federal assistance and local governments and Indian tribes within the boundaries of these counties entitled to receive public assistance (emergency protective services and debris

removal). The state and local governments are thus eligible to apply for federal funding to pay for 75% of the approved cost for debris removal and emergency protective services related to the ice storm, including requested emergency work undertaken by the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the ice storm was of such magnitude that the Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management issued 18 news releases and six situation reports dedicated to updates and coverage of this natural disaster. Multiple power outages required the delivery of drinkable water to communities where water treatment plants were no longer in operation. The Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management received tens of thousands of gallons of water which was distributed during the disaster. Likewise, the state agency was inundated with numerous requests for generators. Emergency shelters were established throughout the northwest portion of the state; and

WHEREAS, Oklahoma Gas and Electric (OG&E) has estimated that the cost of the January 30, 2002, ice storm will exceed $100 million. It was by far the costliest ice storm in OG&E's one-hundred-year history and the worst in terms of the number of customers affected. Nearly 200,000 OG&E customers lost electric power. Although more than 2,000 workers and 700 outside contractors labored to restore power to residents of northwestern Oklahoma, according to the Oklahoma Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, thousands of Oklahomans still did not have electric power for weeks after the storm; and

WHEREAS, according to Governor Keating some Eighty-three Million Dollars is needed to avoid a statewide economic crisis. State government, counties and towns all face tremendous costs in purchasing equipment, paying overtime for essential personnel, and removing debris.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 48TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature finds that the devastating ice storm that hit the state in the last week of January 2002 was of such magnitude, far exceeding the most severe winter storm to ever hit Oklahoma, and created such damage that it would be unreasonable to expect state and local governments to have the necessary financial resources to match storm-related federal aid.

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature memorializes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to pay for 100% of recovery costs from the January 2002 ice storm without any state or local matching funds.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to Joe M. Allbaugh, Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation.

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