Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

January 19, 2012

Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

Temperature and weather extremes are part and parcel of winter in America's 49th state and the people of Alaska are blessed by a highly competent cadre of emergency managers and responders who are highly trained and prepared to address the consequences of these conditions. This winter has been exceptionally challenging to Alaska's emergency management community.

By now most of America is aware of the severe winter storms and flooding that struck Western Alaska from November 7th to November 13th, 2011. As you know, that storm made it impossible for Nome to receive its final winter fuel delivery. We deeply appreciate that your administration made the USCGC Healy available to plow a path through the Bering Sea ice enabling Nome to obtain its winter fuel supply.

As a result of national media coverage many Americans are also aware of the snow event, extreme even by Alaska's standards, which caused the collapse of many structures in Cordova, Alaska and affected other Prince William Sound communities. The State of Alaska is providing life-safety support through its Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and National Guard to these communities. The State of Alaska is assessing whether federal assistance will be required to adequately respond to the consequences of this event.

Today, we write to call your attention to a third event which has largely flown under the radar of national media attention. From November 1 through November 19, the Kenai Peninsula Borough was struck with a series of severe wind storms that caused extensive power outages and damages to public and personal property. This event left an estimated 9,000 residents and businesses with power outages for up to 48 hours in areas, exposing them to life/safety and property damage from flying debris, high winds, no heat, and burst pipes from sub-freezing temperatures.

Since that time, the State, local governments and voluntary agencies have responded to the needs of individuals and families using their resources. However, Governor Parnell has concluded that federal assistance is needed under FEMA's Public Assistance program to adequately address life safety issues including debris removal, as well as infrastructure damage. Accordingly Governor Parnell requested a major disaster declaration for the Kenai Peninsula Borough event on January 12, 2012. We write to endorse Governor Parnell's request for a federal declaration and encourage you to act on the request expeditiously. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Lisa Murkowski	Mark Begich	Don Young
United States Senator	United States Senator	Congressman for all Alaska