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Tuesday, April 24, 2018

Renard Calls on Government to Assist Northeast Wisconsin Farmers' Recovery from Blizzard

DE PERE, WI – “Right now we need maximum support from government agencies to eliminate any red tape and do what we can to help Northeast Wisconsin farmers,” said Alex Renard, 1st State Senate District Republican candidate. In an already difficult farm economy, the damage from the recent April snowstorm could be devastating for some farms. Today, Renard called upon federal and state officials to designate the region an agricultural disaster area and to expand awareness about how and when farmers should document damage.

A little over a week ago, a blizzard dumped more than two feet of snow across Northeast Wisconsin. The heavy, wet nature of the snow caused barns to collapse, resulting in significant injuries and death to livestock, as well as structural damage to milking parlors and farm equipment.

Under federal law, the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is authorized to designate counties as disaster areas and to make emergency assistance available to farmers suffering losses in those areas. At the same time, it is essential for farmers to continually report additional losses as they happen in order to meet federal assistance deadlines.

FSA county offices in Northeast Wisconsin are currently collecting agricultural loss and damage reports from impacted farmers, but the process can be complicated and not all farmers are certain on how and when to file a report. Additionally, many federal agricultural disaster-related assistance programs require farmers to file a claim quickly, often at the same time that farmers are also working to bring herds back to health, rebuild their facilities, and restore their farms.

“Farmers should not lose out on federal emergency assistance while they figure out the full scope of the storm damage,” said Renard. “Government agencies need to assist in the process so that farmers can appropriately assess damage, file reports, and begin to rebuild.”

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