SENATE RESOLUTION

8715

By Senators Baumgartner, Dansel, Billig, Padden, Schoesler, and King

WHEREAS, On November 17, 2015, a storm hit Washington state packing hurricane-force winds, recorded at 119 miles per hour in the Cascade Mountains and 71 miles per hour near Spokane; and

WHEREAS, Three deaths were attributed to the storm, as well as millions of dollars in structural damage; and

WHEREAS, Electric utilities in the Inland Northwest, including Inland Power and Light, Kootenai Electric Cooperative, and Avista Utilities, sustained significant damage that caused prolonged outages; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 180,000 Avista Utility customers lost power, surpassing the notorious ice storm in 1996 and making it the largest outage in the utility's 126-year history; and

WHEREAS, Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency on November 18, 2015; and

WHEREAS, The state of Washington as well as agencies of neighboring states worked to ensure expedited and unencumbered travel for crews that came to support restoration efforts; and

WHEREAS, 700 individuals comprising 132 utility, contract, and mutual aid crews from six western states and Canada worked 16-hour shifts over nearly 10 days to restore service to all Avista customers; and

WHEREAS, Scores of volunteers from the city of Spokane, Spokane County, Avista, and community organizations went door-to-door to check on vulnerable citizens who were without power, providing food, shelter, and assistance to those who needed it; and

WHEREAS, Utility customers exhibited incredible resilience and patience and demonstrated appreciation to the crews working to restore power, bringing them coffee and food and offering encouragement; and

WHEREAS, Spokane city and county leaders, first responders, community support agencies, and countless others worked together to help the community and region recover from the storm; and

WHEREAS, By 3:45 a.m. Friday, November 27, crews had successfully restored power to the nearly 180,000 Avista customers, working through adverse weather and demanding conditions without a single safety incident;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate hereby recognize and honor the citizens and community leaders of the Inland Northwest, as well as utility workers from Washington and throughout the region.