

STATEMENT OF HARRY PORTER, MEMBER, CITY COUNCIL,  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Mr. PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The first thing that I would like to go on record for is thanking the committee for meeting on this special occasion just for us, a very practical reason.

It would be very nice to go home and tell the city council that the \$5,000 they have already put up will be the last \$5,000 they will have to put up to ship us down here to Washington.

Inasmuch as the committee is quite small now, if it would please the chairman, I would be happy to just read the statement very quickly and then submit to questions.

I have only two little departures that will be made after my statement.

Mr. Chairman, it has been left to me to discuss the impact of our last year's flood on the private sector. My first impulse was to bring to you the impressive figures of the total homeowners' loss. Unless, because no two figures agree, unless because no one can exactly measure a homeowner's loss, what are the photographs and slides in your own home worth to you? What about your marriage certificate, or your university books, your children's birth certificates, et cetera? These and many other things were lost, invaluable and yet valueless on the estimator's damage return.

This we can tell you as a fact. The Small Business Administration loaned to 2,622 homeowners \$16,520,110 and 720 businesses \$30,986,322; 95 percent of the homes in the Fairbanks area were affected and to considerable extent. This does not take into consideration the large number of fiercely independent, self-sufficient Alaskans who did their own repair without SBA assistance.

Somehow I would like to impart to you a real feeling of what it means to be a flood victim as a homeowner. Picture for a moment your own home in your mind's eye. Imagine now a flood of water, not crystal clear water, sewage, mud, fuel oil, and debris rising and flowing so fast that it engulfs your home before you can do one thing. Imagine that if it, the water, cannot find a window or door to smash readily to rush in and fill the basement, the very block walls caving in. Now as it steadily rises into your living room, kitchen, and bedrooms to window sill level what will it ruin? How much will you be able to save after immersion in this sewage, mud, fuel oil water after a week? The heating system? Can you save it? The deep-freeze? Washer? Dryer? Wall-to-wall carpet? Mattresses? Refrigerator? Television? Sofas? Chairs?

Gentlemen, we can testify that it will be very little. This without mentioning the irreplaceable items that go so far in making that house your home.

We can testify as a fact that just to haul away the mountain of debris that was once our precious possessions cost the Army Corps of Engineers \$560,000. We can testify that it is a fact that the city had to condemn 42 structures as irreparable.

And that the State Veterans' Affairs inspected 113 homes suffering \$610,000 damage total and wrote off 13 as a total loss. It remains