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BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION TO ASSESS SANDY DAMAGES, PLAN FOR FUTURE STORMS APPROVED BY SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

TRENTON – In an effort to assess the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy and protect the state from future disasters, Senators Bob Smith and Christopher “Kip” Bateman have sponsored a resolution that urges disaster-response agencies to provide a comprehensive analysis to increase New Jersey’s preparedness for similar disasters. The resolution was unanimously approved today by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

“Hurricane Sandy was a disaster of epic proportions that left more than a quarter million New Jersey families without power, washed away streets, bridges, homes and businesses and destroyed entire towns,” said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, Chairman of the committee. “In order to learn from the past and prepare for the future, we must analyze the state’s strengths and weaknesses in terms of disaster preparedness and infrastructure and determine a plan to ensure that this type of destruction never happens again. The Army Corp of Engineers, FEMA and the DEP are uniquely qualified to make these assessments, so that we can rebuild a better and stronger New Jersey.”

The resolution, SR-100, would urge the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to conduct a thorough assessment of the damage in New Jersey caused by Hurricane Sandy, determining why damage was more severe in certain areas than others and providing an expert analysis of measures that may be pursued to protect infrastructure, the environment and the people of the state. The resolution would encourage the Army Corp of Engineers, FEMA and the DEP to provide the Governor and the Legislature with their findings.

“We must do everything possible to prepare for future weather catastrophes and mitigate the extent of their damages,” said Senator Bateman R-Somerset, Hunterdon, Mercer and Middlesex. “If we don’t, it is a slap in the face to all of our residents and communities who lost so much during Superstorm Sandy.”

According to the resolution, Hurricane Sandy is one of the costliest natural disasters in U.S. history, with property damages approaching \$20 billion and the cost of lost business and revenue between \$10 billion and \$30 billion in New Jersey. 346,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, 16,000 people evacuated or displaced from their homes and hundreds of buildings, roads and bridges were washed away during and after the October 29th storm.

The Army Corp of Engineers is a government agency within the Department of Defense made up of approximately 38,000 civilian and military personnel. Their goal is to provide public engineering services in peace and wartime in order to strengthen US security, energize the economy, and reduce risks from disasters. The Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act authorizes the Army Corp of Engineers to conduct emergency management activities including flood preparedness, response and rehabilitation.

FEMA is a governmental agency within the Department of Homeland Security that works to coordinate responses to disasters within the United States that may overwhelm the resources of state and local governments. Not only does FEMA step in during and after a disaster to coordinate response, but it also engages in mitigation efforts to break the cycle of disaster damage.

If approved by the Senate, the resolution would be transmitted to Governor Christie; the Administrator of FEMA; the Region II Regional Administrator of FEMA; the Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the Commanding General and Chief of Engineers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; President Obama; the Majority

and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate; the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives; and every member of Congress elected from New Jersey.

The resolution now heads to the full Senate for approval