



U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.)
Winter Storm Fern Floor Speech
February 4, 2026
(As prepared for delivery.)

Mr. President, I join my colleague, Senator Roger Wicker, to draw to the attention of the American people to the widespread devastation caused by Winter Storm Fern.

This powerful storm has affected millions of Americans across the country, but its effects were especially severe in the South – a region not typically equipped to manage prolonged snow, ice, sleet, and dangerous winter conditions.

This storm was particularly devastating in Mississippi, a state that simply lacks the infrastructure and equipment necessary to respond to a storm of this magnitude.

Tragically, Winter Storm Fern has claimed the lives of at least 26 Mississippians as of February 2nd.

Each loss is heartbreaking and come with so many stories.

The breadth and severity of this disaster have left swaths of the Delta and north Mississippi with landscapes littered with shattered trees and downed power lines.

Line crews, in the bitter cold, from Mississippi and other states are making steady progress in restoring power to the nearly 200,000 families and businesses that lost power.

While we applaud that progress, it may still take another week to fully connect everyone, especially in more rural counties that lack resources.

Long-term recovery will, of course, take much longer than that.

I'm grateful for the strong response from our state and federal partners.

More than 600 Mississippi National Guard soldiers on an extended deployment are performing critical missions including road clearance, refueling operations, distribution of goods, and conducting welfare checks.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is assisting with welfare checks and emergency calls in Alcorn and Tippah counties that were hit so hard.

Numerous state agencies are playing vital roles in the response, including the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Mississippi Department of Transportation – led by Brad White, Mississippi State Department of Health, and Mississippi Forestry Commission.

FEMA has also been on the ground, providing \$3.75 million in rapid emergency funding for generators, debris removal, and other urgent needs.

I also want to recognize the extraordinary contributions of volunteer organizations, including national groups like the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, and Christ in Action – as well as countless local organizations whose help has been invaluable to our state.

These accolades cannot overshadow the resiliency and kindness of individual Mississippians who are simply looking out for each other to overcome yet another natural disaster.

Still, the work is far from finished.

I, along with fellow members of the Mississippi congressional delegation, strongly support Governor Reeves's request for a major disaster declaration and we encourage President Trump to approve it swiftly.

I ask my colleagues and the American people to keep the people of my state and everyone harmed by Winter Storm Fern in your prayers.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

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