



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 22, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to address expediting the release of federal funds to help Puerto Rico recover from the effects of multiple natural disasters. We believe an Executive Order or other executive action is the best option to address these concerns. As you know, Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the entire island of Puerto Rico over three years ago. Unfortunately, the hurricanes' effects have been exacerbated by a series of earthquake clusters which have further damaged the island's infrastructure and created critical deficiencies in Puerto Rico's energy sector. Now, as their fragile healthcare system grapples with COVID-19, it is more important than ever that we get these American citizens the help they need.

At more than \$100 billion of damages, Hurricane Maria was the third most costly hurricane in U.S. history. Unfortunately, the consequences of the widespread damage from the storm remain unresolved to this day. Multiple businesses have closed permanently, and lives continue to be on hold until reconstruction can be completed. As you are aware, Congress allocated around \$42.5 billion in federal funds for the island's recovery and reconstruction.¹ However, a majority of these funds have been critically delayed for over three years, including to Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) and other federally funded projects.

The people of Puerto Rico have long awaited the release of these funds. Therefore, we believe it important to expedite the release of federal funds to help Puerto Rico recover from the effects of multiple natural disasters and believe an Executive Order or other executive action is the best option to address these concerns. We look forward to working with you for the benefit of the people of Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darren Soto".

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ritchie Torres".

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress

¹ For combined disaster relief appropriations, see P.L. 115-254, P.L. 116-20, P.L. 115-56, P.L. 115-72, and P.L. 115-123.