



Advocacy partner of Environmental Defense Fund

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

RE: Emergency Supplemental for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leaders Schumer and Pelosi,

Today, millions of Americans across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands remain in crisis as they attempt to recover from the destruction of multiple hurricanes. More than 100 days have passed since Hurricane Maria. Sadly, the death toll exceeds 1,000, only 63.5 percent of customers have had their power restored, and nearly 1 in 10 citizens still lack access to clean drinking water. The government response has been slow and insufficient, irresponsibly prolonging and increasing the risks to life, health, and safety.

EDF Action supports efforts to move a comprehensive aid package quickly through Congress that promotes future risk mitigation through climate and disaster resiliency while ensuring that Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are treated with the same urgency and response efforts that Texas and Florida received after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Congress must urgently take up this effort, adopt a far-sighted view of the critical needs of these communities, and support supplemental spending legislation that will:

1. Provide vital humanitarian aid to millions of American citizens still lacking access to critical services.
2. Reject the Administration's ill-advised, draconian budget cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency, an agency that provides essential public health services before, during, and after natural disasters.
3. Support a community-driven recovery effort that promotes local stakeholder engagement and long-term sustainable development, while safeguarding critical protections provided by environmental, health, and labor standards.
4. Build a modern and resilient electric grid with smarter technology, including renewables, micro-grids, demand response, and energy efficiency programs.
5. Prioritize the rebuilding of sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including drinking water, storm-water, transportation, and communications systems.

Addressing the current crisis in these devastated American communities while laying the groundwork for the long-term development of a resilient infrastructure and economy in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands is critical. We urge Congress to act now to pass a comprehensive emergency supplemental bill to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Bonfiglio".

Joe Bonfiglio, President
EDF Action