

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 31, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500-0004

Dear President Trump:

We are writing in support of Governor Ricardo Rosselló's appeal of FEMA's August 15 denial of a 90-day extension for debris removal (Category A) and a 120-day extension for emergency protective measures (Category B) at 100 percent Federal funding pursuant to Major Disaster Declaration FEMA-4339-DR and to urge you to approve the appeal.

As you know, the current arrangement for Category A and Category B funding is scheduled to expire on August 21, 2018, and September 15, 2018, respectively. Over the last year, Puerto Ricans have been working diligently to put their communities back together after Hurricane Maria devastated the entire territory. However, the conditions that merited the 100 percent cost share remain. This funding is essential to allowing Puerto Rico to continue working to re-establish some of the most basic community necessities, including power restoration, water, critical infrastructure, and debris removal.

Prior to Hurricane Maria making landfall, the financial resources of the territorial government and municipalities were limited. Following the storm, financial resources became more strained and are exhausted. FEMA choosing to not extend the 100 percent Federal funding for these projects carries significant risk of compounding tragedy. Not only can the municipalities not afford to pay to have debris removed, but existing debris and unaddressed emergency protective measures would likely cause further damage to communities, which could increase the severity and impact of future storms. Puerto Ricans need FEMA to provide reliable support as they continue to address Hurricane Maria's devastating impact.

Just this week, the official death toll for Puerto Rico made Hurricane Maria the deadliest storm of the 21st century. The Federal government must not abandon the Americans living there at this critical juncture.

Therefore, we request your swift reconsideration of the denial for 100 percent Federal funding and ask that you extend the 100 percent Federal funding through November 30, 2018. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Alison Northrop, Chief Director for Oversight, at (202) 226-2616 or Adam Minehardt, Staff Director, at (202) 225-2361.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security



NYDIA VELAZQUEZ
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business