

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 3, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Executive Office of the President
Office of Management and Budget
Washington D.C. 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

This year our country has experienced devastation and destruction as not one but three hurricanes made landfall on U.S. soil within a matter of weeks. At the same time, our Western states have been battling wildfires that have caused terrible loss of life and left thousands homeless. In these times of need, we must demonstrate our commitment to the Americans affected by these disasters and engage the full force of the federal government to assist those in need.

Since September 8, Congress has passed two emergency supplemental appropriations bills providing roughly \$51.7 billion to help communities affected by these disasters. These bills provided critical funding to address the immediate needs facing these communities—emergency relief, temporary housing, restoring critical services, and beginning the cleanup process. Now it is time to think long-term about what it will take not only to recover, but also to rebuild in a way that is smart, efficient, and better prepares us for the next disaster. Across the country, from the wildfires in the West to the flood and wind damage in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, we can invest in technology, conservation and infrastructure that will mitigate further damage and make our communities more resilient.

You have committed to sending Congress a request for a third disaster supplemental in November. This letter details what we believe should be included in the request to address the needs of *all* communities affected in recent months by these disasters. As with past disasters, the request must come in the form of emergency spending—the federal government owes it to the people of Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and our Western states to step up, now, when it is most needed. Nearly 30 days passed between Hurricane Harvey making landfall in Texas and Hurricane Maria hitting Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; it is critical that this timing does not unfairly disadvantage the funding and assistance made available to the islands. Reports of more than 40 days without electricity show that essential services have yet to be restored to many areas of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Special Considerations for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

While all of the communities impacted by the recent hurricanes are facing an uphill climb on the road to recovery, Puerto Rico faces unique challenges due to the debt crisis it faced before the hurricane, the requirements imposed on it through PROMESA and the Fiscal Management

Oversight Board, and the state of its electrical grid. These factors require us to consider additional measures in the third supplemental specific to Puerto Rico to ensure that the Commonwealth has all the tools needed to recover from this disaster.

Liquidity. We request that the Administration propose a facility to provide Puerto Rico with access to sufficient liquidity to make up for the Puerto Rican government's lost revenues and to enable the island and its instrumentalities to function. This facility should provide Puerto Rico with either grants, or no-interest unsecured loans that will be explicitly canceled, forgiven, or converted into grants if Puerto Rico does not run an operating surplus in the three-year period beginning November 1, 2021. These funds, as well as any funds freed up by these loans, should be strictly, explicitly protected from creditors and cannot be applied to debt service.

Electric Grid. We request that the Administration submit specific legislative language requests on electric grid rebuilding and resilience, given that additional authorities will be necessary to rebuild more resilient and sustainable grids in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Authorities and resources separate and distinct from the Stafford Act are required to address this rebuilding effort. We support efforts to reduce the use of imported diesel to generate electricity, increase the use of renewable generation resources, and modernize the design of the grid and the location of its power generation, which would help make the system less vulnerable to power outages. We are committed to the long-term rebuilding of these power grids in a way that is more resilient to extreme weather events, reducing the potential need for future disaster assistance, and prioritizes rebuilding with technologies like microgrids, utility-scale and distributed renewable energy, and other distributed energy resources. We believe that leveraging federal analytical capabilities within the Department of Energy and the National Labs could greatly improve plans to rebuild these grids. Rebuilding Puerto Rico's and the U.S. Virgin Island's electric grids with modern technologies will improve reliability and can help save consumers and taxpayers money, in addition to being a much more prudent use of federal dollars than simply rebuilding the grids back to their pre-storm condition. We also request that any legislative proposal ensures that rebuilt infrastructure primarily benefits consumers but does not contribute to servicing of pre-existing debt obligations, and that it ultimately be subject to a strong independent utility regulator.

Ending Wildfire Borrowing

We concur with the Administration's position that the problem of wildfire "borrowing" must be addressed in a more structured, long-term manner and that a solution should not degrade our ability to respond to all natural disasters and provide state and local assistance for those disasters. We ask that you support a legislative proposal that amends the Budget Control Act to increase the annual amount available for all disasters within the Disaster Cap Adjustment and authorizes wildfire suppression as an eligible activity. We believe that access to the Disaster Cap and stopping this erosion of the agencies' budgets, coupled with their existing authorities, will produce increased active forestry management and therefore oppose linking any forestry reforms to this solution to ending wildfire borrowing.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Fully fund FEMA Disaster Relief through the end of FY 2018. Your request for supplemental funds should include sufficient resources to fully fund FEMA Disaster Relief. The calculation should be based on the known and projected costs of disasters that have already occurred including: Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria; Presidential declarations for wildfires; and a projection based on the 10-year average for unknown disasters through the end of fiscal year 2018. Further, consistent with FEMA emergency management practice, no less than \$1 billion should be maintained to pay for no-notice catastrophic events, such as an earthquake or terrorist attack, so that recovery from these disasters is not slowed to pay for future disasters.

We also need to increase the 3.34 percent State and territorial allowance for fiscal management and grant oversight of FEMA Public Assistance funding. Given the significant amount of disaster aid that will be provided to Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the states, additional capacity is required to implement effective financial management controls to ensure that grants made to recover and rebuild are executed according to federal standards.

Permit FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grants to be eligible for hazard mitigation funds. To help strengthen communities impacted by the extraordinary fire season and consistent with FEMA Public Assistance programs, we should allow recipients of FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) to be eligible for hazard mitigation funding. In fiscal year 2015, legislation was enacted making up to 15 percent of the total cost of an FMAG eligible for mitigation projects. We recommend the same allowance be made for FEMA fire assistance in fiscal years 2017 and 2018. Mitigation will help prevent the devastating impacts seen in communities this year with unexpected hospital evacuations and devastated neighborhoods.

Establish a Nationwide Mitigation Program: The next supplemental should establish a mitigation program nationwide to secure the most vulnerable infrastructure. The American Society of Civil Engineers has graded the state of the Nation's infrastructure a D+. Since 1988, FEMA has invested \$13.8 billion in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program projects, an amount dwarfed by costs responding to disasters. For every dollar spent on mitigation four dollars are saved in disaster response and recovery. As billions of dollars are allocated to rebuild communities affected by the recent hurricanes, we also urge the Administration to include in the supplemental request a flood standard for federally funded building and rebuilding projects to protect taxpayers and federal infrastructure investments from future flood risks.

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

Provide funds for CDBG-DR to help all affected communities with long-term recovery. The next disaster supplemental should include sufficient CDBG-DR funding for long-term recovery and mitigation for future disasters, restoration of infrastructure and housing, and economic revitalization in the most impacted and distressed areas that received a major disaster declaration in 2017. Since the 1990s, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) CDBG-DR program has helped hundreds of thousands of families in communities across the country recover from the impacts of natural disasters, such as hurricanes, severe flooding, tornadoes, and wildfires. As seen in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, communities not only

require the assistance of FEMA, first responders, and aid organizations to address the immediate life and safety threats that these disasters pose, but also subsequently require additional federal aid for long-term recovery to rebuild privately-owned and rented homes, roads, schools, health-care centers, and public facilities, which are critical to community stabilization.

Meanwhile, many states and local governments, as well as the territories, have limited resources and capacity to address their unmet housing and community redevelopment needs post-disaster. As a result, we are also requesting that the Administration include additional funding for technical assistance and capacity building in order to help states and local governments align and expend resources effectively. This will ensure resources meet the diverse housing and economic development needs at the local level. Without these combined investments, communities that are impacted by major disasters, could lose entire workforces and industries, as well as experience shifts and instabilities in their rental and ownership housing markets that could impact their regional, and even the national, economy.

Rebuilding Infrastructure

Provide funds for the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program. Your supplemental request should include funding for the Army Corps' Civil Works program, including the Investigations, Construction, Operation and Maintenance, Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies, and Expenses accounts. Investigations funds would be used to conduct studies of projects that would address flood and coastal storm damage reduction. Operation and maintenance funds would be used for activities including the dredging of federal navigation channels, as well as repair of storm-related damages to Corps operated and maintained projects. Flood control and coastal emergencies funds would be used to support emergency operations and repair storm damages to Corps projects that are non-federally operated and maintained. Construction funds would be used to repair Army Corps projects that provide flood protection, ecosystem restoration, or other important public benefits. Funding for expenses would cover the administrative costs of overseeing emergency response and recovery activities.

Repair critical water infrastructure. While efforts are still underway to restore reliable drinking water and sewer service in many areas impacted by the hurricanes, serious challenges continue to threaten the stability of water and sewer infrastructure. In particular, virtually all of Puerto Rico's water systems – when functioning – are not in compliance with basic standards required by the Safe Drinking Water Act. As aging water systems are repaired and rebuilt, dedicated funding will be needed to ensure compliance with basic standards to ensure the water supply is free from contamination and to protect from future flood damage risk and vulnerabilities to natural disasters. Your supplemental request should include funding for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's State Revolving Funds to be allocated to the affected areas and directed to allow water and sewer infrastructure to be rebuilt in a way that protects it from future flood damage risk and natural disasters. It should also recommend additional subsidization and waivers of matching and cost-share requirements for Puerto Rico, given its fiscal challenges.

Protect public health and provide community and natural resource protections. Widespread flooding caused by the hurricanes provided a rapid pathway to spread toxic chemicals and

hazardous waste across landscapes and waterways. Leaking underground storage tanks, compromised landfills and hazardous waste facilities, and disturbed Superfund sites threaten public health, water quality, and wildlife. Most urgently, toxic chemicals flowing out of open dumps in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have created a public health emergency by contaminating the drinking water supply for many of the residents living on those islands. Funds are needed to repair and rehabilitate waste disposal infrastructure to protect public health and the environment, including the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program, Leaking Underground Storage Tank program, the U.S. Navy Defense Environmental Restoration fund, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act program.

To continue and enhance the state and territories' abilities to detect and respond to toxic chemical releases and other threats to public health, we also believe that your request should include funds to replace and repair monitoring equipment, expand monitoring to areas impacted by storm damage, and provide technical assistance to protect drinking water sources and environmental quality. Also, because resources allocated to ongoing disaster response activities are stressing agencies' base budgets, you should request additional funding to support agencies' disaster response to ensure that ongoing, critical public health and environmental programs are not neglected at agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency.

Provide funds for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Emergency Relief (ER) Program. The FHWA ER Program should receive adequate funding to address its current backlog of damage assessments from previous disasters in addition to providing sufficient resources to accommodate the needs of states and territories affected by recent disasters. The FHWA ER Program, authorized under 23 U.S.C. 125, provides funds for emergency repairs and permanent repairs on federal-aid highways and roads, tribal transportation facilities, and roads on federal lands that the Secretary finds to have suffered serious damage as a result of natural disasters. Damage estimates following disasters are produced by affected states and territories.

Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other locations in the region incurred significant, and in some cases crippling, damage to highway assets from recent disasters and will require substantial assistance to return their transportation systems to safe working order. Puerto Rico, for example, reportedly has more than 100 damaged or destroyed bridges and less than 400 miles of the island's 5,000 miles of roads are open. For some communities, particularly those in the territories, it is also necessary for the federal government to cover 100 percent of the damage, waiving any statutory match requirements, and to lift any caps on the amount of aid that can be provided.

Provide funds for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Public Transportation ER Program. Your supplemental request should include sufficient funding for the FTA's Public Transportation ER Program, authorized under 49 U.S.C. 5324, to recover from damage to public transportation systems in affected areas. Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other locations in the region operate vital public transit services that connect communities to their homes, jobs, hospitals, and basic services. This program helps states and public transportation systems pay for protecting, repairing, and replacing equipment and facilities that have suffered serious damage as a result of an emergency. The program can also fund the operating costs of evacuation, rescue operations, or temporary public transportation service, as

well as the costs of reestablishing, expanding, or relocating service before, during, or after an emergency. Public transportation agencies have extensive experience with receiving grants from FTA, so this program is the most efficient means of providing assistance to transit providers following an emergency. For some communities, particularly those in the territories, it is also necessary for the federal government to cover 100 percent of the damage and to lift any caps on the amount of aid that can be provided.

Provide funds for FAA–Grants-in-Aid for Airports. Many airports suffered varying degrees of damage as a result of the recent hurricanes and had to considerably curtail or even shut down operations during and after the storms. These airports were instrumental in hurricane relief efforts and evacuating affected residents. In order to ensure that the affected airports have the necessary resources to repair hurricane-related damage, authorization is needed for the Secretary of Transportation to make available emergency airport improvement project grants for public use airport facilities and to set the federal share of project costs at 100 percent, consistent with P.L. 109-87 following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Provide funds for economic development. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has a history of success working in regions hit by disasters. EDA already works with local communities trying to spur economic activity in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and California, and is well positioned to respond to these disasters by helping rebuild infrastructure that helps existing businesses rebound and attracts new industry. Every dollar of EDA spending leverages up to \$10 in private and local investment. Additionally, we believe that the National Institute for Standards and Technology’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is well positioned to help small and medium-sized manufacturers recover from the storms and wildfires by providing direct assistance through the existing MEP national network and the MEP centers in the affected states and territories. Your supplemental request should include funds for this important program.

Housing

Support for Rental Housing Recovery. The Administration should request sufficient funding to restore or replace federally-assisted housing damaged in the disasters and ensure that displaced HUD-assisted households can locate housing during the recovery. In addition, the Administration should allow the Secretary of HUD to authorize public housing agencies (PHAs) in affected disaster areas that have also received a major disaster declaration to transfer funds between their public housing capital, public housing operating, and Section 8 voucher accounts. Specifically, these PHAs require the authority to combine assistance provided under sections 9(d) and (e) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 and assistance provided under section 8(o) of such Act. This administrative relief and flexibility is necessary for PHAs to make rapid repairs and effectively assist HUD-assisted households which were displaced as a result of a major declared disaster, an overwhelming amount of which are elderly or disabled. Further, the Administration should request funds for additional rental assistance to ensure that low-income families who have been displaced by recent storms can afford stable housing as their communities recover.

Small Business Administration

Support for small businesses. According to FEMA, “almost 40 percent of small businesses never reopen their doors following a disaster.” When natural disasters hit, big businesses often have the tools and resources to recover quickly, including access to capital and expertise. Small businesses, on the other hand, need more help in the wake of a disaster. Beyond financial support, they need technical assistance to get their businesses back up and running. The Small Business Administration (SBA) plays a critical role in helping small businesses and homeowners recover after a natural disaster strikes. Long-term recovery after the hurricanes in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands will require that the SBA be well-equipped to help small businesses reopen their doors.

As you prepare the next supplemental, it is crucial that the SBA receives the support that it needs to help small businesses recover from the devastation caused by hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, and recent fires. The long-term recovery efforts will necessitate additional levels of funding for the Disaster Loan Program – including subsidy and administrative expenses – as well as robust funding for Small Business Development Centers that were authorized under the Recovery Improvements for Small Entities After Disaster Act of 2015.

Rural Development and Agricultural Assistance

Support rural and agricultural communities. In the face of the historic losses experienced by the agriculture industry due to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, we strongly encourage you to request funding for existing emergency programs vital to the recovery of rural areas. This request should include funding for the Emergency Conservation Program for the rehabilitation of farmland damaged by natural disasters; the Emergency Watershed Program to repair damages to rural watersheds; and the Emergency Forestry Restoration Program. Additionally, in order to make agricultural land more resilient and prepare land to better weather future natural disasters, this request should also include new mandatory funding for wetland restoration through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and watershed restoration through the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program.

We encourage you to request funding for additional USDA programs that can be used for repair and recovery in both rural and urban areas, including the Emergency Food Assistance Program for food banks and pantries; Rural Development programs, including housing, water and waste, and community facility programs; and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to assist citrus producers in dealing with both short and long-term damages to groves.

Support Crop Loss Assistance. Agricultural losses have been estimated in some parts of the hurricane and fire affected areas to be as high as 90 percent. We believe you should use all existing authorities to assist these producers, and should request changes in current disaster programs to reflect the scope of these disasters and the assistance needed for recovery. This could include removing the cap on the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish program; providing flexibility to relax or waive other disaster assistance program requirements (such as the Tree Assistance Program and Livestock Indemnity Program),

or the allowance of retroactive purchase of Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program coverage, with necessary safeguards to maintain program integrity.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Unlike states, Puerto Rico is not currently eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Instead, Puerto Rico receives nutrition assistance in the form of a block grant. In cases of disaster, this capped grant cannot expand to meet increased need. Puerto Rico is also not eligible for disaster food assistance traditionally made available to states during presidentially declared disasters. We urge you to request additional funding for Puerto Rico's Nutrition Assistance Program to cover the island's prolonged nutrition needs as well as support lifting the restriction on disaster nutrition assistance so USDA can work with Puerto Rico to address future disaster nutrition demands.

Labor and Job Training

Support occupational health and safety. We encourage you to request funds in the next supplemental for worker protection, including to Puerto Rico's State Occupational Safety and Health Agency, to provide needed personnel and safety and health training for first responders and recovery and reconstruction workers; work with other federal agencies to develop a roster of affected workers; identify the need for personal protective equipment; and conduct monitoring and surveillance of risks to workers.

Create jobs for hurricane-impacted communities. The next supplemental should require that federal contractors and recipients performing relief and reconstruction services employ workers affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria for at least 50 percent of the workforce on all projects receiving federal funds. Each contracting or granting agency make publicly available a semiannual report on the hiring of such workers.

Increase funding for unemployment assistance and job training. Workers in the affected areas saw many of their workplaces destroyed and damaged. We encourage you to request funding and the authority to expand access to disaster unemployment assistance benefits and job training services so that dislocated workers can resume employment as soon as possible.

Reinstate affirmative action requirements. Rules of engagement for rebuilding Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands must not suspend worker protections. Maria contracts were declared to exempt from affirmative action plans. The next supplemental should reinstate these requirements.

Health and Human Services

Medicaid. To ensure individuals impacted by Hurricane Maria can access needed health care and to sustain Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands' damaged and deeply distressed health care systems, additional funding and appropriate flexibilities should be provided under Medicaid, including waiving cost sharing requirements, simplifying and streamlining enrollment and eligibility, increasing federal financial support, raising available funding under the territories' capped allotment, and providing appropriate funding and flexibilities so individuals displaced by

Hurricane Maria and other vulnerable populations can access essential health care and providers are reimbursed appropriately.

Repair public health. Power outages, limited access to clean drinking water, decreased vector control, and other environmental factors all put Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands at increased risk for a range of infectious disease threats, yet laboratory and disease surveillance capacity have been decimated. Furthermore, the disruption of the healthcare system has severely limited access to immunizations and clinical screenings. Dedicated funding is needed in the next supplemental for all communities to:

- Maintain CDC's Rapid Response Capacity, which includes deployment of Epidemic Intelligence Service and other staff to help with pressing public health problems;
- Increase Local Public Health Infrastructure, including infectious-disease surveillance and control, mold cleanup and remediation, vector control, birth defects surveillance and laboratory capacity; and
- Prioritize Environmental Health to ensure affected communities are protected from mold, harmful chemicals and other toxins.

Ensure access to health services. In Puerto Rico and U.S Virgin Islands, many hospitals and other health facilities remain closed or are operating at reduced hours using generators for electricity and with severe challenges related to water sanitation and telecommunication, including internet and phone service. Women can be particularly vulnerable during hurricanes in light of increased risk of sexual assault and maternal mortality, making support for necessary contraceptive and maternity care essential. Community Health Centers are among the health care facilities that will need critical investments, as they serve many of the islands' most vulnerable residents and will play a key role in addressing the extensive behavioral health and other health needs in their communities during recovery and beyond. We urge you to request resources in the next supplemental to ensure access to health services for all affected communities.

Address mental health and substance use disorders. Hurricanes can exacerbate mental health needs and conditions in the short and long terms. Stressful situations, such as a natural disaster, can also present a challenge to those in treatment for a substance use disorder (SUD), especially when existing sources of treatment are disrupted. Additionally, natural disasters and the trauma associated with them can lead to the development or exacerbation of a SUD, and a break in services and treatment can mean that those individuals are at risk of relapse. We urge your supplemental request include funding specifically for behavioral and mental health supports.

Increase funding for social services, including repair of facilities. As has been done in previous emergencies, additional resources should be included for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). SSBG is a flexible, state-administered funding stream that can be used for a wide range of social services. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, SSBG funded case management, counseling, education and training, and child welfare and day care programs. With the appropriate authority, SSBG can also support domestic violence and mental health services, and the repair costs for health, child care and other social services facilities, and other activities that are badly needed on the island.

Provide significant funding to address widespread damage to Head Start programs. Head Start agencies in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Texas, and Florida have all been damaged and will need repairs. In these states and territories combined, there are approximately 150,000 children being served at Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Head Start agencies are often on the front lines when it comes to providing both educational and basic supports for children and families. Your request should include funding for this important program.

Provide additional funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Early learning and care providers are critical in meeting the needs of families affected by hurricanes. Without child care, parents will not be able to go back to work or attend school. It is likely that early learning and child care centers, which are often laid on a less solid foundation than public schools, have sustained significant damage in the storms. Therefore, it is important that any supplemental package provide funding for CCDBG in order to support early learning and care programs in the affected areas, as well as early learning and care programs that enroll displaced children.

Prevent drug and device shortages. It is critical to prevent critical drug and device shortages for Puerto Rico and the mainland. FEMA and the FDA need resources to assist companies to reach full power and capacity, move products off of the island, and establish contingencies for acquiring medical products from manufacturing facilities off the island if the power grid cannot be restored adequately and promptly.

Education and Training

Provide service and support in native language. Your supplemental request should include funding for translators and the translation of materials will ensure that service disruption is minimized.

P-12 Education

Provide funding and support to affected school districts to resume operations. Your supplemental request should include funds for public schools, including preschools, in the affected areas so that they can re-open and begin enrolling and educating all students, including students with disabilities as identified in the existing IEP or section 504 plan. This funding is critical to helping ensuring all students in affected areas can resume their education as quickly as possible. Funding should be used to repair, open, and operate schools.

Provide temporary emergency aid to public schools for displaced students. Many students who are displaced from Harvey, Irma, and Maria will need to attend school in other cities or states. These schools were not expecting an influx of students and will need additional funding to meet their needs. Funding should be allocated to public schools from preschool through grade 12 that can be used flexibly to meet the increased demand for services in affected school districts.

Provide funding for McKinney-Vento services targeted in hurricane disaster zones. Your supplemental request should include funds to address the significant increase in homeless

children from preschool through grade 12 in public schools affected by the hurricanes. Homeless students have particular rights under McKinney-Vento. In addition, this funding can be used to help meet P-12 students' basic needs (clothing, school supplies, etc.) and to provide counseling and mental health services for students.

Increase funding for CNCS. Following a disaster, national service members act as a force multiplier, providing key resources and significantly expanding the capacity of existing organizations in affected areas. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) requires supplemental funding to expand its capacity to respond to the disasters. Additional resources would allow them to recruit, train, and deploy additional National Civilian Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps members to affected areas while maintaining their presence in other locations.

Higher Education

Provide funding to help institutions of higher education recover and rebuild. Your supplemental request should include funds to support to institutions of higher education to repair and rebuild facilities, critical equipment, educational supplies, and the technology necessary to disburse student financial aid.

Provide transitional funding to support colleges or universities temporarily enrolling students affected by the hurricanes. Your supplemental request should include funding for both institutional assistance and student aid. The funding would compensate for additional instructional, transportation, living and other expenses that result from students temporarily enrolling at other higher education locations in the United States.

Provide emergency financial aid to affected students in disaster areas for extra expenses incurred as a result of the hurricane, including food, shelter, child care, and medical treatment. Institutions of higher education could be required to establish emergency aid programs—which have been proven to improve student completion—as a condition of receiving the funds and a mechanism for disbursing the funding to students.

Provide funding for loans issued under the Education Disaster and Emergency Relief Loan Program. Section 824 of the Higher Education Act permits the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, to establish an Education Disaster and Emergency Relief Loan Program for institutions impacted by a major disaster or emergency. Funds may be used for construction, replacement, renovation, and operations costs resulting from the disaster or emergency. Your supplemental request should include funding for these loans.

Veterans Affairs

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plays a vital role in the Nation's response to emergency situations. As a response the recent hurricanes, the VA expanded its mission assignments to include staffing Federal Coordinating Centers, activating and deploying emergency medical personnel, and opening its doors to the community at large. Many of these

costs are reimbursed by HHS. However, VA has had to utilize base medical care funding to cover overtime/double duty pay. It is imperative that this funding is replenished to ensure that base medical programs are not adversely affected by the activation of medical personnel.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Repair and invest in our nation's weather infrastructure and forecasting. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) sustained major operational costs during the hurricanes, including navigation response teams opening ports after storms, higher than average fuel costs and flight hours for hurricane hunter flights, unscheduled ship response to Puerto Rico, unexpected coastal surveys, surge forecasting hours, and evacuation costs. These critical missions have cut into funds for other NOAA needs, including critical fisheries surveys and charting requirements, and your supplemental request should include funds to cover NOAA's disaster response expenses.

Additionally, we believe further investments in our weather infrastructure and forecasting are critically needed to avoid and mitigate weather damage in the future. Funding is needed for the Hurricane Forecast Improvement Program and other forecast development programs including Finite Volume on a Cubed Sphere or FV3, research and operational supercomputing for weather models, integration of NOAA's storm surge models with the National Water Model's inland flooding predictions, research-to-operations funding for weather models, the replacement of NOAA's Gulfstream-IV and King Air aircraft, backup generator capacity for the NOAA's Aircraft Operations Center, additional Coyote UAVs, and infrastructure updates for the National Weather Service's weather radar and airport observations systems.

We also need to enable colocation of weather forecasters with emergency management officials to improve disaster preparedness and response. We urge you to request bill language that would cut the red tape preventing these efficiencies and allow NOAA to negotiate Weather Forecast Office leases directly with Emergency Operations Centers in the State of Florida.

Invest in Resilience. When natural systems like coral reefs, mangroves, beaches, dunes, wetlands, and floodplains are healthy and functional, they protect local communities from the most severe impacts of natural disasters—slowing storm surge, blunting wave action, absorbing inland flooding, and buffering coastal built infrastructure. NOAA also plays a critical role in ensuring the resilience of our coastlines and coastal communities, and we urge you to request funds for programs that will help coastal communities recover from disasters and increase their defenses against future storms. For example, marine debris from Hurricane Irma is threatening the Florida Keys coastline and must be removed. Coral reefs, which provide natural protection from coast-eroding storm waves, are threatened by runoff from Hurricane Harvey. Other programs supporting coastal resilience include the Regional Coastal Resilience Program, Fisheries Habitat Restoration, and the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund.

Legal Services

Provide assistance with legal services to low-income Americans. Pro-bono legal help can be critical to low-income Americans when disasters strike, ensuring they can secure disaster

assistance in the wake of legal problems like lost and destroyed documents, helping with repair scams and evictions, and assisting in family issues like child custody. We urge you to request funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) to help the estimated 11.5 million LSC-eligible clients located in the affected states and territories.

Emergency Response

Provide funding to upgrade to Next Generation 9-1-1. Emergency response technology is increasingly outdated and inefficient in the Internet age and many are unable to utilize text messages, video, and data. Current 9-1-1 capacity was stretched to the limit and even taken offline in responding to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, as well as the wildfires in California. Funding is needed to assist states and localities to fully deploy NG 9-1-1 systems nationwide.

Department of Justice

Provide funds for emergency federal law enforcement support. Department of Justice law enforcement entities (ATF, DEA, FBI and USMS) responded to requests for assistance by state and local entities in the aftermath of all three hurricanes. For example, the ATF deployed a 20 person Special Response Team (SRT) to the Houston area to support its Houston Field Division's response to Hurricane Harvey including break-ins at federal firearm licensee locations and the FBI's tactical and field office SWAT personnel deployed to provide force protection for urban search and rescue operations. Your supplemental request should include funds for these important missions.

Prisoner movement. On September 22, 2017, the United States Marshals Service (USMS), Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS) was tasked to shift operational focus to assist the United States Courts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The devastation caused by consecutive hurricanes created a state of emergency requiring the evacuation of all federal prisoners on both islands. To date, JPATS evacuated over 1,440 prisoners and provided Safe Haven transportation to USMS and Federal Bureau of Prisons dependents to the U.S. mainland.

Repair of Federal Facilities

Numerous federal facilities were damaged as result of the storms. Damaged facilities include but are not limited to:

- Department of Defense installations in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean, including damage to Civil Air Patrol infrastructure;
- Department of Veterans Affairs Hospitals, Clinics and Benefits facilities;
- Department of Homeland Security, including Coast Guard infrastructure;
- National Estuarine Research Reserve facilities;
- Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory;
- Southeast Fisheries Science Center;
- National Marine Sanctuaries facilities;

- Arecibo telescope;
- NASA Kennedy Space Center;
- NASA Johnson Space Center; and
- Bureau of Prisons' FCI Three Rivers, FCC Beaumont, MDC Houston and FCC Coleman.

The Administration must identify all affected facilities and request sufficient funds for repair.

Federal Lands and Historic Properties

Provide funding for hurricane damage recovery for federal land management agencies and historically significant properties. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria caused significant property and resource damage at iconic national parks, forests and wildlife refuges in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and other states, including Everglades, Biscayne, Dry Tortugas and Virgin Islands national parks, Big Cypress National Preserve, El Yunque National Forest, and Vieques National Wildlife Refuge. It is essential that your supplemental request provide sufficient resources for the operating and construction appropriations accounts of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service so that these agencies can fully fund needed repairs and replacement of facilities, roads, trails and basic infrastructure such as water and electrical systems, as well as conduct debris and vessel removal on public lands, address employee housing and personal damage claims, and replace vehicles and equipment damaged or lost during the storms.

In addition, funds are also needed to repair and replace damaged federal research and data collection infrastructure funded by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, including facilities, equipment and instrumentation such as stream gages and air monitors. Consistent with previous disasters, we also believe it is critical that your supplemental request include funding for the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund to provide grants to States and tribes to repair and rehabilitate historically significant properties that are listed or are eligible for future listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Provide funds for fire damage restoration and risk mitigation on federal lands.

Catastrophic wildfires swept across the nation this year, from Alaska to Florida. Of the 8.8 million acres burned by wildfire to date in 2017, 5.2 million acres are managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service. These public lands require post-fire restoration and mitigation to return them to pre-fire conditions, ensure proper management and public use, and prevent future catastrophic fire or other disaster events, such as mudslides, which can be exacerbated by non-restored burned areas. The needs include rebuilding roads, trails and bridges, repairs to recreation and administrative facilities, restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, removal of hazards to public safety, reforestation and invasive plant treatments. In addition, we believe that the Administration's request should also include investments to accelerate forest thinning and fuels reduction activities so that we are better able to mitigate the risk of future wildfires and protect high-risk communities.

Funding additional hazard mitigation and resiliency investments. Consistent with previous storm recovery efforts, your supplemental request should include funding for the U.S. Department of the Interior to support grants and other investments to assess the vulnerability of

federal and non-federal lands to future storm damage and to better protect communities and natural resource values from the anticipated effects of flooding, sea level rise, and other natural resource challenges. Rivers, harbors, canals, fisheries, estuaries, coral reefs, and other valuable natural resources were damaged by the hurricanes, harming local economies reliant on fishing and recreation and devastating habitat and ecosystems. Funds are needed not only to assess and remediate these critical natural resources in order to provide relief to local economies and mitigate environmental damage, but also to mitigate the effects of future storms through projects that strengthen coastal and inland ecosystems.

Department of Energy

Your supplemental request should include funding for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Offices of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability and Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and the National Labs, specifically for program direction. These funds would be used for federal contractor support, overtime, and travel related to non-FEMA reimbursable emergency response efforts. This funding would enable DOE to meet the full need for energy subject matter experts to conduct damage assessments, be available at state and utility emergency operations centers, expedite real-time restoration planning, and coordinate preparedness with state and local partners.

Cost Share Requirements and Other Considerations for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Waive Match and Cost Share Requirements for Puerto Rico. Many disaster assistance programs require a match or a cost-share from a state or local government or territory. Puerto Rico's lack of liquidity due to its financial crisis all but ensures that it will not have the funds to meet these requirements. For example, there will be no less than a 10 percent cost share for Puerto Rico under the Stafford Act for all rebuilding projects. Given Puerto Rico's financial situation before the storm, there is no local funding for the match. This does not and cannot mean that Puerto Rico should not receive assistance. Your supplemental request should include a waiver of the match requirements for FEMA assistance programs for Puerto Rico. In addition, there are other programs that require a funding match, a cost share, or a full or partial repayment that should be waived, including the safe drinking water state revolving fund, funds provided through the Economic Development Administration, airport grants provided through the FAA, Emergency Relief funds provided through the FHWA and the FTA, funds provided by the Department of Agriculture, and funds provided by the Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition to Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands is also facing significant economic challenges as it undertakes the rebuilding effort and will require administrative or statutory flexibility to waive state and local cost-share requirements for federal rebuilding programs or will need to receive supplemental funds to meet the requirements if they are not waived. Finally, given the unprecedented scale of this rebuilding effort, we believe that the Administration's request must include a comprehensive, government-wide framework that leverages the role of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs and other agency partners to provide technical assistance and management capacity to assist the U.S. Virgin Islands government

during the recovery and rebuilding process and to ensure appropriate oversight of the expenditure of federal recovery funds.

Oversight & Accountability

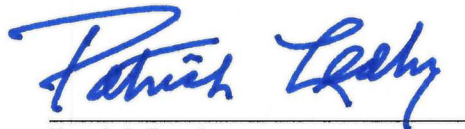
Provide funds for oversight and accountability to ensure good stewardship of federal funds.

As this letter details, a significant influx of funding is needed to carry out major projects in all states and territories affected by the hurricanes. The supplemental must include sufficient resources to ensure proper oversight and accountability. Funding must be provided to the Government Accountability Office and the relevant agency Inspectors General for robust real-time auditing to ensure proper compliance with laws and regulations, reduce improper payments, identify fraud, and ensure appropriate controls, and also for long-term tracking and evaluations of the effectiveness of federal spending and federal agency coordination. Because these offices provide critical ongoing oversight of existing programs and previously appropriated funds, we believe that supplemental funds must be provided in order to avoid hampering their normal capacity.

Sincerely,



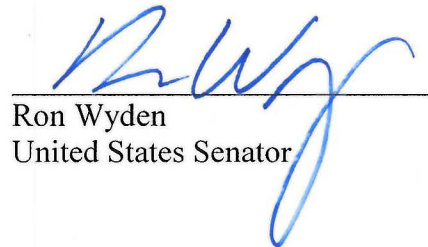
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



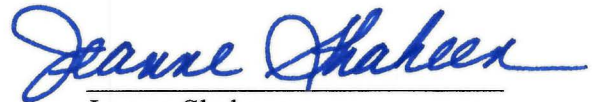
Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



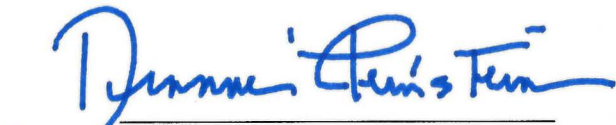
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator




Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

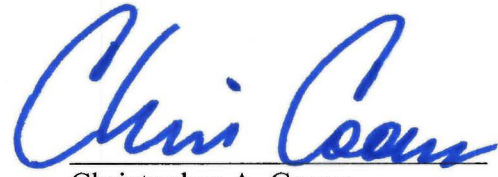


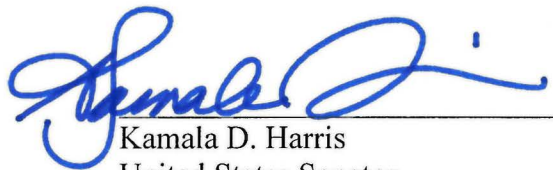
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

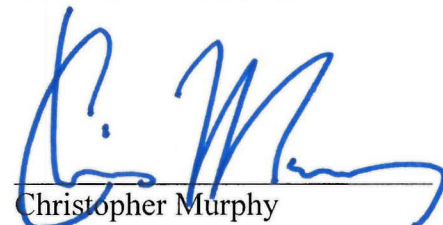

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

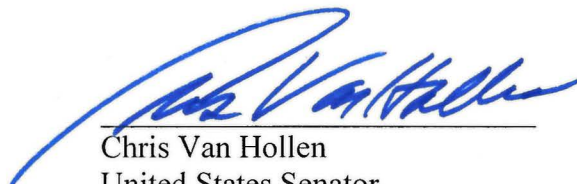

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator


Christopher Murphy
United States Senator


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator


Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



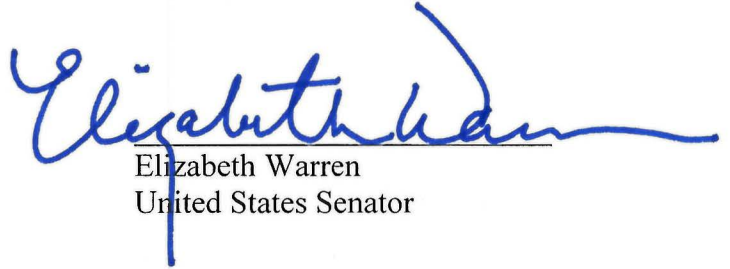
Al Franken
United States Senator



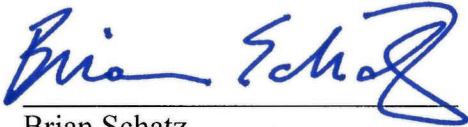
Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



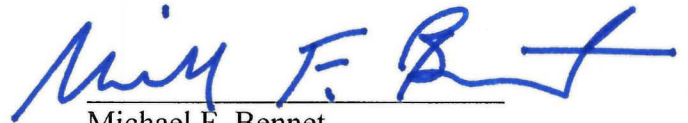
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator