October 7, 2017

Hon. Mitchell McConnell, Jr.
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Paul Ryan, Jr.
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Majority Leader, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Democratic Leader, and Ms. Democratic Leader:

On behalf of the 3.4 million American citizens of Puerto Rico, I am very grateful for your concern and your dedication to Puerto Rico’s recovery. Puerto Rico has suffered an unprecedented catastrophe that has largely destroyed our physical infrastructure, including our electrical and telecommunications systems, impaired our public health facilities, and gravely limited the ability of our central and municipal governments to meet basic human needs.
The unprecedented island-wide devastation suffered in Puerto Rico has led to independent damage assessments in the range of $95 billion - approximately 150% of Puerto Rico's GNP. In addition to the physical destruction, Puerto Rico’s economy has ground to a near standstill. Very few businesses are operating, and those that have reopened have done so at a highly-reduced level compared to where they were prior to Hurricane Maria. Despite everyone’s best efforts, it is very likely that many businesses will not be back in operation and running at pre-hurricane levels for a considerable period of time. Financial damages of this magnitude will subject Puerto Rico's central government, its instrumentalities, and municipal governments to unsustainable cash shortfalls. As a result, in addition to the immediate humanitarian crisis, Puerto Rico is on the brink of a massive liquidity crisis that will intensify in the immediate future.

We are grateful for the federal emergency assistance that has been provided so far. However, absent extraordinary measures to address the halt in economic activity in Puerto Rico, the humanitarian crisis will deepen, and the unmet basic needs of the American citizens of Puerto Rico will become even greater. This could lead to an acceleration of the high pace of outmigration of Puerto Rico residents to the U.S. mainland impacting a large number of states as diverse as Florida, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, Texas, and beyond.

It is our understanding that the Administration, through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has made an additional supplemental appropriation request to Congress. When deciding on this request we ask that Congress strongly consider a number of additional funding categories, beyond the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), to meet the immediate emergency needs of Puerto Rico.

- HUD - Community Development Block Grants - $3,200M
- DHS - Community Disaster Loan Program - $500M
- HHS - Social Services Block Grant - $500M
- DOT - Emergency Relief Program - $149M
- SBA - Disaster Loan Program – $90M
- USDA – Commodity Assistance Program - $83M
- USDE – State Educational Agencies/Hurricane Education Recovery - $78M

Please see a more detailed table attached to this message. This supplemental should serve as a down payment on hurricane recovery efforts while we await full assessment of needs.
Puerto Rico has experienced a natural disaster of a magnitude not seen in over a century, and we are doing everything possible to address the needs of the American citizens of Puerto Rico during this time of crisis. However, the unprecedented level of destruction, coupled with the almost complete shut-down of business in Puerto Rico, have made it impossible for us to meet the considerable human needs without the measures proposed above. Puerto Rico is committed to respond to this emergency, stabilize our economy, and recover and rebuild our island. With your leadership and support, I am confident that in time the people of Puerto Rico will not only recover, but will return stronger than ever.

Sincerely,

Ricardo Rosselló Nevares
Governor