

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2020

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write in support of Puerto Rico Governor Wanda Vázquez Garced's request for a major disaster declaration for the earthquake that devastated the island on January 7, 2019, and the continued aftershocks. The 6.4 magnitude earthquake was the most powerful quake to hit the island in over 100 years,¹ and sizable aftershocks continue to threaten lives and property throughout Puerto Rico.

At present, thousands of Americans are sleeping outside or in shelters because their homes were damaged. Without a major disaster declaration, these survivors are still in the dark on whether they will be able to apply for Federal housing benefits. We are already over 72 hours since the request was made and we fear that your failure to grant the declaration is needlessly extending suffering and goes against the Federal government's promise to help people before, during, and after a disaster.

Despite it being two years after Hurricane Maria, many parts of Puerto Rico's public infrastructure are still in the beginning phases of their recovery and have not been awarded any funds from FEMA. Now, the island faces additional damage from the continued earthquakes, and Federal resources will be key in the long process to rebuild from the rubble. Thousands of people are unable to return to their homes, and without Federal housing resources, Puerto Rico will not be able to meet the unmet needs of survivors and aid them through these tragic events. Quick Federal action is paramount in assisting our fellow Americans recover.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Member of Congress


NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ
Member of Congress

¹ Lubben, Alex. "This Is What Puerto Rico Looks Like After 2 Devastating Earthquakes." Vice. January 7, 2020. Accessed January 10, 2020. https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/epngga/this-is-what-puerto-rico-looks-like-after-2-devastating-earthquakes



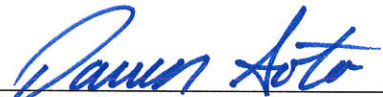
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress



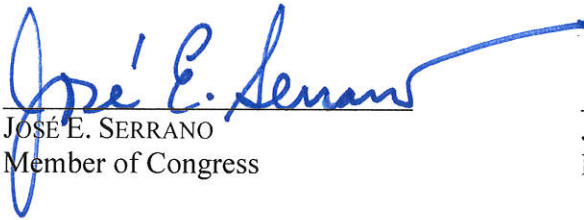
DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.
Member of Congress



AL GREEN
Member of Congress



DARREN SOTO
Member of Congress



JOSÉ E. SERRANO
Member of Congress



JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA
Member of Congress



YVETTE D. CLARKE
Member of Congress



KATHLEEN RICE
Member of Congress



ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
Member of Congress