



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

September 12, 2017

The Honorable William B. Long
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C St., SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Long:

As we begin to address the considerable damage caused by Hurricane Irma to the state of Florida, we write to request assistance in restoring our state's communications networks.

According to a FCC Communications Status Report issued today, 24 percent of Florida's wireless communications systems are inoperable, with many more operating on generators or battery power. This includes 29 "911" call centers either lacking service or operating at reduced capacity. Overall, more than 7.1 million cable and/or telephone subscribers in Florida, Georgia and Alabama have been impacted.

At a time when many residents of Florida have relocated from their homes, access to wireless communications is particularly important. Wireless phones provide displaced residents with a critical lifeline to first responders, family and friends, important information about the state's recovery from the storm, and government assistance.

The ability to contact emergency services in the days following a natural disaster is vital to the safety and security of communities. We request that FEMA coordinate with relevant federal, state and local officials to facilitate the ability of communications companies to access affected areas, assess damage to their networks and restore service.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Nelson".

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marco Rubio".

Marco Rubio
United States Senator