



United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

October 24, 2017

The Honorable Brock Long  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Long and Secretary Chao:

As you both well know, Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017, as a major storm that has left the island in disarray. Now, more than a month later, many citizens continue to lack reliable access to essential aid and supplies due to infrastructure that has been critically damaged or destroyed. We are writing to urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to promptly assist and identify interim solutions for Puerto Rico in repairing its damaged roads and bridges.

During our recent visits to Puerto Rico, we witnessed the devastation this storm caused to the island's infrastructure, including numerous bridges that were damaged or completely destroyed. The hurricane hit rural communities in Puerto Rico's mountainous interior especially hard, effectively cutting them off from the rest of the island. It has been reported that small communities, such as Charco Abajo in rural Utuado, have resorted to replacing bridges with makeshift pulley systems to ferry supplies across the Vivi River. While the ingenuity on behalf of local residents has helped deliver supplies to areas that federal officials overlooked, it is not a sustainable or safe solution.

- What are your agencies' plans to ensure the delivery of aid to Puerto Rico's isolated, rural communities in light of this infrastructure damage?
- What interim solutions can be enacted to quickly restore access to these communities?
- What are the agencies' plans to help rebuild and repair roads and bridges on the island?

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Recovery efforts in rural areas, and in communities throughout Puerto Rico, will continue to be slow if these infrastructure needs are not addressed. It is critical that FEMA and DOT work together to quickly reconnect isolated communities to the rest of the island, and begin the larger task of helping Puerto Rico rebuild its transportation infrastructure.

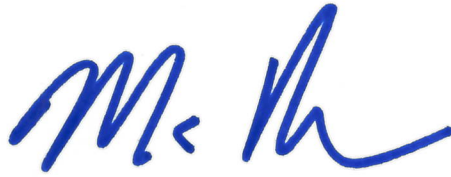
Thank you for your prompt consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



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Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



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Marco Rubio  
United States Senator