

“These are generators that are designed to work for days and weeks, not three or four months,” he said. “I don’t know how long they will last.”

The government says it will have 95 percent of the power restored by Dec. 15, but many fear that goal is optimistic on a island that needs to replace at least 50,000 electricity poles and more than 6,500 miles worth of cable.

While radio is thriving, other media outlets haven’t been as lucky. One of the island’s largest newspapers, El Nuevo Dia, is warning staff members to prepare for layoffs blamed on declining ad sales after Maria, employees said.

Manuel Rodriguez, the lawyer and spokesman for the newspaper’s labor union, said the paper was being short-sighted. The country needs print media more than ever right now, and storm-rattled employees need their jobs, he said.

“This is an incredibly complicated moment,” Rodriguez said. “This is not the time to be threatening layoffs.”

Also this week, Sistema TV — a channel that began broadcasting in the 1980s and focuses on public education — announced that it was closing its doors because of Maria.

Sajo Ruiz, the chief creative officer at the Sajo Garcia Alcazar advertising agency, said his company has lost at least \$2 million in business since the storm hit. Clients who had ad campaigns designed for television and online have pulled their business.

Social media campaigns have also ground to a halt amid the island’s limited cellphone service. Ruiz said radio ads and truck-mounted loudspeakers have, once again, become viable and attractive options.

“We’ve been pushed back in time several decades,” he said. “We have to reinvent the way we deliver messages.”

Puerto Rico has been trapped in a decade-long recession and, even before the storm, unemployment was running in excess of 10 percent. And it’s likely that some advertisers may not survive this latest hardship.

“We’re hoping that the electrical grid can come back up in the metropolitan area,” Ruiz said. “But it needs to happen fast or we’re going to start seeing massive layoffs and companies are going to have to go out of business.”

As both a television presenter and a radio host, Rafael Lenin López, has seen both sides of Maria. On his morning news show, on Radio Isla, the commercial breaks have grown from about four minutes pre-Maria to about eight minutes now, as advertisers pile in.

“Contrary to predictions and global trends in the industry, radio proved itself in this circumstance to be vital,” López said. “It became something of a first responder and the first line of help.”

Indeed, local government relied on Wapa Radio to send out emergency information after the storm, with the governor’s office buying fuel for the station’s generators in those initial hours.

There were two reasons the station managed to stay on the air, Blanco said. One was because the station’s 10 employees dropped everything they were doing and volunteered their energy and time, some of them working 36 hours straight. The second reason was because the station has maintained its old, outdated technology. Other stations went off the air when their fiber optic cables were severed. But Wapa had backup microwave transmitters, he said.

López, the anchorman, said the power of radio hit him the day after the storm, when he turned the dial and found only dead air.

“It gave you a feeling of desolation,” he said of the silent airwaves. “And it made you realize how important radio is just to make you feel like you have some company.”

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Despite Hurricane Maria Damage, Puerto Rico Plans for a Merry Christmas (Travel Market)

by Richard D'Ambrosio / October 16, 2017

[Travel Market](#)

With nine out of ten homes still without electricity, and first responders packing San Juan hotels, you might think that Puerto Rico would feel the Grinch stole their Christmas.

But the country's tourism industry, battered and bruised but still standing, is staking a claim for its future – setting its sights on welcoming any and all visitors by Christmas.

Jose Izquierdo, executive director at the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, noted how San Juan withstood Hurricane Maria's Category 5 winds. "San Juan is a very sturdy city. We were pretty much unscathed throughout the storm, and after a full assessment, the outlook is positive."

The tourism agency has been participating in the three phases of recovery. The first – relief – ended Oct. 5, focusing mostly on providing rapid assistance to residents and the tourism industry. This included helping coordinate volunteer efforts with hotels, airlines and cruise lines.

Currently, Puerto Rico is engaged in the rebuilding phase, including taking an inventory of all of the major tourism venues and attractions like the marketplaces and beaches. This phase should last until Thanksgiving.

Airlines, many hotels, some attractions operating

The Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) is fully operational with scheduled domestic and international flights. Rafael Hernández Airport (Aguadilla), Mercedita Airport (Ponce), José Aponte de la Torre Airport (Ceiba), Fernando Luis Ribas Dominicki Airport (Isla Grande) and the Antonio Rivera Rodríguez Airport (Vieques) are operational and offering limited service.

San Juan Harbor is open and resumed homeport operations this past weekend with the departure of Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's Adventure of the Seas. Over two thousand travelers are expected to travel in and out of San Juan to embark on these journeys and more than 45 cruise departures are already scheduled from San Juan in the coming weeks.

The Mall of San Juan and Plaza Las Américas are open for shoppers, and the Puerto Rico Museum of Art in Santurce and the Ponce Museum of Art are open for visitors. Bacardi tours are expected to begin welcoming guests Nov. 1, and El Morro and other San Juan historic sites are expected to open in the coming weeks.

Eighty-four hotels are open with most taking new reservations. For a full list of the status of hotels, travel agents can visit the Puerto Rico Now website.

Most of these hotels are already taking reservations for future vacations, or will be by Oct. 31, Izquierdo said. "FEMA, first responders, and volunteers with the NGOs are packing the hotels," he said. "Even bed and breakfasts are putting their rooms available for relief."

Izquierdo acknowledged that there was some erosion on San Juan's beaches, and he has been posting pictures of the waterfront and other popular venues through his Twitter handle to demonstrate how the city is getting back to normal. "By Dec. 20th, leisure travelers will be sure to enjoy our beaches," Izquierdo said.

El Yunque sustained severe damage

The news is not so good for tourism outside San Juan. "In the far west, I've seen some pictures. It will take some time."

An initial inventory has been conducted on natural attractions, like the 28,400-acre El Yunque National Forest, said Izquierdo.

A Washington Post story described the rainforest, the only one in the United States outside of Hawaii, as being decimated.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service web site currently says: "El Yunque National Forest will remain closed until further notice."

A Post reporter described how "ferns and palms have been stripped of their fronds, and hardwood trees snapped in half like twigs. What was once a blanket of emerald green draped across the mountainous landscape is now a brown pile of detritus."

"The slow return of these island gems could impact reopening timelines for those ultra-luxury properties dependent on their proximity to the parks," Izquierdo said.

Positive outlook for the future

The final pillar in Puerto Rico's plan is recovery, Izquierdo said, which he described as a "gradual restart to business as usual for tourism," including marketing to generate future visits.

During this phase, “our messaging has to be a little less than ‘despacito,’” Izquierdo said, borrowing from the popular song that this year invigorated locals and tourists alike with the Puerto Rican zest for life. “Our message will be more about our resilience, that tourism is up and running.”

Izquierdo called the Dec. 20th target date for this phase as “conservative.”

Voluntourism and acts of kindness

Mainland travel agencies could be interested in the voluntourism packages that are increasingly popular, Izquierdo said. “It’s becoming a thing here. We’ve seen some of our hotels working on packages to do that, coordinating with NGOs on the ground to invite travelers in to assist in the rebuilding.”

One market that has been open to these trips has been what the island calls the “Diaspora,” Puerto Ricans who moved to the mainland but still have family and friends on the island.

One local operator, Local Guest, has set up a web page on Indiegogo, “to provide relief and volunteers to hard-hit communities.”

“We’re not only working locally with tour operators, but also at the corporate level, with the major flags down here, Marriott and Hilton, to work on packages,” said Izquierdo, who feels optimistic in part due to one of the core strengths of the island, its hospitality.

A Washington Post reporter who was trapped on the island with his family during the hurricane, wrote a story about his experience, praising the locals for how they protected his family throughout the ordeal.

“There are so many positive stories, acts of kindness, rising out of this struggle, that we will carry with us as we rebuild,” Izquierdo. “These experiences will make us stronger.”

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SURVIVOR’ STORIES

Maria survivors discuss Puerto Rico's recovery (Winchester Star)

By ONOFRIO CASTIGLIA

Oct 18, 2017

[Winchester, Va., Star](#) WINCHESTER — Yanni Collazo and his fiancée, Ivelisse Velez, had been planning to come to the U.S. mainland from their native Puerto Rico for some time, but on their own terms, after finishing school; still, for the time being, they’re happy to be away from the devastation successive hurricanes have wrought on their home island.

“Every day you wake up and there is a different task, and it’s not like you go to [a job] ..., it’s just to try and survive the day,” said Collazo, 22. To contact family in Virginia, he and some people from his neighborhood pooled gasoline and drove to San Juan, the island’s capital, “just to make a call ..., just to say, ‘Hey, we’re alive.’”

Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory with a population of about 3.4 million. After sustaining damage during Hurricane Irma in mid-September, the island took a direct hit from Hurricane Maria two weeks later, which left the island without electricity and in a shambles. Gov. Ricardo Rosselló has called the situation the “biggest catastrophe” in the island’s history.

Four weeks later, most of the island still does not have food, water, power or phone service. In many cases, degraded homes are insufficient in providing shelter for children or the elderly. Relief and assistance have arrived on the island, but anger and resentment are mounting over the stated insufficiency of the response and the dismissive messages of President Donald Trump.

“If we are not considered in equal terms to Florida, the Virgin Islands, Texas and so forth, Congress will have to deal with a worsened humanitarian crisis, massive exodus from the island, health care problems and more,” Rosselló said in a recent statement, referring to other U.S. lands hit by recent hurricanes.

Collazo is from Canovanas, a mountain municipality east of San Juan. Velez, 21, is from Vega Baja, a town near the ocean east of San Juan. He was studying mathematics at college and was three classes away from graduating when Maria came; she was studying biomedical science and had a few semesters left.

On Wednesday evening, the couple relaxed together in a Frederick County apartment belonging to Velez's brother, who is a manager at the local Kraft Foods plant and has lived here for about five years. Velez's stepfather and mother, who is receiving cancer treatments, are also in Winchester. The family has been reunited here since Saturday.

"People got desperate in the first week," Collazo said, referring to water and power needs. He recalled weathering the storm at Velez's family home in Vega Baja — the roads turned to rivers and the back deck on the house ripped off during the storm.

"It felt like the whole house is going down," Velez said. "We got really scared then."

But the house made it, albeit badly damaged. After that it was patching together a survival strategy to carry the family beyond the canned food and bottled water they had managed to get at the store before the rains came.

"We waited five hours to get gas," Velez said, recalling the armed police and military guarding the gas stations. Everything had to be purchased with cash, a problem for some families. The most immediate work came in clearing the roads as best they could, so people could move around. Collazo said his car was pretty much destroyed by fallen trees.

In their time following the hurricane, the family did not see any relief efforts reach them, Collazo said, though they heard helicopters passing overhead. "We managed by ourselves."

Once non-military flights started leaving the island again, Velez's brother managed to get them plane tickets at a good price and they left. They have no plans to go back.

"I'm worried," Velez said of her grandparents, who live in a cement home and at least have a gasoline-powered generator, which they use sparingly. There's also the millions of islanders (most of the population) who don't live in coastal metro areas, but small towns deep in the island's mainland — most of them probably don't have generators, or anything else. "They don't even have basic needs near them."

Basic needs and related logistics are a problem on the rugged island.

Katie Williams, a 1999 graduate of James Wood High School who works in San Juan (she declined to name her employer), said in a phone call from Puerto Rico that resources on the island fluctuate. On Wednesday about 17 percent of the island had power — "but that's generation, not distribution," she said. "I don't know anyone, personally, who has power at their house. ... Nobody has drinkable water."

One problem compounds another, Williams said. For example, a Boil Water Advisory is in effect island-wide, but "how do you boil water without power?" Similarly the lack of communications logistics keeps the government from effectively getting the message to boil water out to residents. "There's a lot of old folks who are suffering."

There are resources on the ground, Williams said. "It's just not happening fast enough" beyond the big coastal cities, where only a fraction of the people live.

Williams said she knows of misinformation on the mainland and political cat-fighting surrounding the crisis. Trump has been heavily criticized for his response, which has included a series of tweets blaming the island for much of its own misfortune and suggesting that federal aid will have to end altogether.

"It just makes you crazy," Williams said, adding that consistently witnessing the trauma on the island takes a mental toll on mainland workers there; one of her co-workers had an emotional breakdown this week. "I feel like people just don't understand, and maybe it's the same with [Trump]... how bad it is here."

Williams said she likes to think about the resilience of the Puerto Rican people.

"Everyone is getting tired, but there's still that little hope."

Resilience and brotherhood are also a pleasant topic for Macy Guthridge, a Middletown resident who has, since January, been living on the Coast Guard base in Aguadilla on Puerto Rico's northwestern tip.

"It was like an apocalyptic movie," Guthridge, a 25-year-old Sherando High School graduate, said of the sights following the hurricane.

Guthridge — who called Puerto Rico her "favorite place" — is scheduled to start boot camp soon; her husband, Travis Guthridge, U.S. Army, is stationed in Aguadilla and she will be as well. On Wednesday, she was home in Middletown with her two children, ages 5 and 6, who were sent to stay with grandparents after the hurricane; she goes back this coming Wednesday.

At the base, they do not have water or power, Guthridge said. There are generators, which she knows most islanders don't have.

Travis Guthridge is a mechanic and recently could not fix a vehicle meant to carry water to an inland area — so he used his personal four-cylinder Toyota Tacoma to get a pallet of bottled water and a “water buffalo” (a large water tank) to the people.

“The people in the mountains ... they are stuck,” Macy Guthridge said. She worries about malnourishment in children and a lack of medicines to control disease.

“Last time I was there they had one hospital up and running on the whole island.”

At the airports, crowds of people are trying to leave, hoping to get commercial tickets at “\$2,500 a pop,” Guthridge said. “My family, being military, we wouldn't be able to afford [that].”

Guthridge also said she knows of misinformation on the mainland.

“Some people say wrong things when they don't know full situations.” But she stressed the coming together among people on the island. “There wasn't a ‘side,’ there wasn't a ‘we,’ there wasn't a ‘you,’ there was an ‘us.’”

Guthridge said the devastation runs deep; even when the infrastructure is rebuilt, people's businesses and livelihoods are gone. “They have nothing.” Still, she is optimistic the island will pull through. “Day-by-day, little-by-little, it does get better.”

Collazo and Velez say they are enthusiastic about their future and ready to work hard to complete their educations. To get on their feet, he has applied for a job at Costco and she has started training to work at Victoria's Secret in the Apple Blossom Mall. And they are ready for civic engagement as well. One of the first things they did after getting to the mainland was register to vote.

— Contact Onofrio Castiglia at ocastiglia@winchesterstar.com

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Stranded by Maria, Puerto Ricans Get Creative to Survive (NY Times – English & Spanish)

Three weeks after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, people across the island, especially those in remote areas, are improvising ways to stay alive.

By CAITLIN DICKERSON

OCT. 16, 2017

[New York Times](#)

- [Same story, Spanish version](#)

CHARCO ABAJO, Utuado, P.R. — When Hurricane Maria swept away the bridge that led in and out of Charco Abajo, a remote village in the mountainous inland of Puerto Rico, Carlos Ocasio and Pablo Perez Medina decided that they could not wait for help to arrive.

When the wind and rain calmed, the welder and the retired handyman climbed off the edge of the bridge and jumped down onto a pile of debris. They crossed the Vivi River, whose waters had risen to their chests, and walked several miles to a hardware store, where they bought a cable, a metal harness and wheels.

They built a pulley that now spans the gap where the bridge once was, and attached a shopping cart, after removing its legs and wheels, which they have been using to transfer food, water and supplies across the divide. Though aid groups began to arrive a week later, the two men, both 60 years old, raised a sign to describe how it felt in Charco Abajo immediately after the storm. It reads “Campamento de los Olvidados,” Spanish for “Camp of the Forgotten.”

Nearly a month after Maria devastated this island commonwealth, life remains a struggle. Even as some assistance has arrived, residents have learned to improvise without power or running water, especially those who live in remote areas, who waited the longest for help from emergency responders and for whom recovery is the furthest off.

The winding roads that once paved a lush, tree-lined route from San Juan, the capital, to Utuado now appear post-apocalyptic. Leafless, branchless trees, denuded by Maria's winds, are tangled around one another and spill

out into the highway. Rock formations, once covered with vegetation, have been stripped bare. Permanently windblown palm trees look like half-shaven heads. And houses that were once tucked neatly into the hills are now roofless, irreparably damaged wrecks sliding down the sides of them.

All that remains of the many wooden, one-room houses that once dotted the hills here are tall and narrow three-sided concrete structures that were built to protect bathroom plumbing, and which are now surrounded by piles of rubble.

Examples of the creativity of people living in the mountains are on display across the countryside. All day and night, people who live in the mountains cluster along roadways to bathe and do laundry in places where locals have redirected water from higher up that spews out of PVC pipes. They fill empty bottles and buckets, which they use to clean their homes and flush toilets.

But for some, the situation is more fragile than it is for others.

More than 100 bridges in Puerto Rico were damaged by Maria and 18 have been closed indefinitely, according to Ivonne Rosario, a spokeswoman for Puerto Rico's transportation department. An unknown number collapsed during the storm, leaving entire communities like Charco Abajo stranded.

Down a series of dirt roads that are still covered with mangled trees, fallen power lines and fiber-optic cables, Charco Abajo is home to about 120 people, mostly adults who are retired or unemployed, and a few children.

At 47, Lilia Rivera hobbles at the pace of someone decades older. She speaks in a whisper because her vocal cords are partly paralyzed. And she is hypersensitive to allergens — the slightest whiff of smoke, chemicals or perfume can cause her throat to close.

Her remote location and health problems, caused by exposure to pesticides, have made her doubly vulnerable to Hurricane Maria's destruction.

"At the beginning, I was asked if I wanted to leave," she said, sitting with her cane resting in her lap in her light-filled living room on a rural hillside in the Utuado municipality. "But wherever I go, the environment needs to be controlled. That doesn't exist in a shelter."

Despite having been trapped in their homes for three weeks and subsisting on dwindling reserves of bottled water and ready-to-eat military meals, some residents are surprisingly at ease. On the day they were visited by a reporter, they were quick to point out that other Puerto Ricans were living in worse circumstances, though it was hard to imagine whom they could have been talking about.

Marilyn Luciano, who has taken on the unofficial role of village secretary, went door-to-door to check on her neighbors. She chatted casually about her son who lives in Florida and was recently married. Ms. Luciano said that the laid-back spirit of people who live in the mountains of Puerto Rico was helping them weather the storm. "This is what we do," she said. "It's who we are."

Even Ms. Rivera and her family were hesitant to complain. She, her husband, three children and one grandchild all live together and were born and raised in Utuado.

Her husband, Leonardo Medina, a retired distribution worker in the pharmaceutical industry, was busy chopping fallen trees outside their home when they were visited by a reporter. After the family lost power, he connected Ms. Rivera's oxygen tank to a car battery, which is now powering it through an inverter.

Mr. Medina said that if his wife's health were to begin to deteriorate, he knew that his neighbors would not hesitate to help him carry her across the river. Ms. Rivera chimed in. "We Puerto Ricans are fighters and hard workers," she said. "My life depends on it."

A version of this article appears in print on October 17, 2017, on Page A18 of the New York edition with the headline: Stranded by a Hurricane, Creative Puerto Ricans Improvise to Stay Alive. Order

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EMIGRATION

'Millions' of Puerto Ricans may move to the mainland in hurricane's wake (Daily Kos)

By Laura Clawson

Wednesday Oct 18, 2017 · 11:29 AM SAWST

[Daily Kos](#)

Puerto Rico continues to face disaster and desperation without adequate support from the federal government. Even the official death toll shows neglect—officially 48 people have died, but a Vox investigation put the number closer to 450. Even as supplies, from **FEMA** and from private donations, become more available on Puerto Rico, getting them to every household remains a challenge. The mayor of the town of Aguas Buenas is going door to door distributing food and water, but:

The town still needs more tarps to replace roofs ripped off by the storm. Thunderstorms and downpours this week have made that need even more acute.

As for what else he will find and what else he will need, that's hard to know. While more than 8,000 homes have been checked on, Mayor Garcia has about 1,500 more to go.

The devastation from the hurricane, following years of economic crisis, will likely lead to a mass exodus. That will make Puerto Rico's recovery still more difficult—the island already faces a shortage of medical personnel, for instance, which will only get worse as the people who can leave do so—and it will have an effect on the cities and states that Puerto Ricans move to:

Cities popular with Puerto Ricans, such as Orlando, Hartford, Conn., and Springfield Mass., are bracing for more students, many of whom come from families living below the poverty level. Politicians, meanwhile, are weighing the potentially significant electoral consequences of a wave of migrants who are expected to lean Democratic — particularly in Florida, which already boasts half a million residents who are Puerto Rican-born.

At a news conference last week, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló warned that without significant help, “millions” could leave for the U.S. mainland. Those leaving are most likely to end up in Florida, Texas and Pennsylvania, which have been the most popular destinations for Puerto Ricans in recent years.

You'd think that electoral concern might shake loose some Republican votes for more significant government aid, but apparently contempt for Puerto Ricans (and possibly confidence in voter suppression tactics) is winning the day.

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Father leaves Puerto Rico to protect his family (WUSA)

Puerto Ricans are leaving the island -- by the thousands.

Stephanie Ramirez, WUSA 11:28 PM. EDT October 18, 2017

[WUSA, CBS, Washington DC](#)

WASHINGTON (WUSA9) - It's almost as if he's a refugee, in his own country.

"A week ago I decided to look for a safe haven for them, for my mother and for my family. That's why we're here," said Edgar Garcia.

Relying on relatives, Edgar is one many Islanders now in the states with his family, hoping to protect them from the Hurricane Maria's aftermath in Puerto Rico.

Garcia says he couldn't be more grateful for the supplies and donations, but almost a month later, he still says "Inland, we're not receiving it."

"It's like a terror movie," Garcia said, describing the past few weeks.

He showed WUSA9 the photos, which included the cement wall to his family's home on the ground.

Garcia called his Hamburger restaurant in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico a total loss. He also says his finance's hair salon in San Juan suffered damage.

The couple decided to enroll their son in school in Florida, where they can stay with family.

On Wednesday, WUSA9 spoke to Garcia as he was visiting his brother in Virginia.

Also in the state tonight, was a “Virginia is United for Puerto Rico” fundraiser. It was hosted by Virginia’s First Lady, Dorothy McAuliffe.

Virginia’s First Lady says money raised is going towards the fund Puerto Rico’s First Lady created. It’s called, Unidos por Puerto Rico or United for Puerto Rico.

Wilson Hardware Kitchen and Bar gave its space for the event, along with 25% of its food and drink proceeds.

“The main problem is the level of devastation. We never before got more than 80% of the Island without power. We still have 80% of the Island without power. At this time, less than 50% of the Island is with running water. Communications are on the verge of a collapse again,” said the Congresswoman to Puerto Rico Congresswoman, Jenniffer González-Colón.

“When you see families struggling with clean water, you can’t imagine that in American 2017, this is what we’re seeing,” said Mrs. McAuliffe.

At the Arlington fundraiser is where WUSA9 also found Garcia. His facial expression looked like one of exhaustion and despair as he looked down at the restaurant table.

Earlier, Garcia said, “it’s more than hard. I got here a week ago, making arrangements to keep my family safe here. And I cannot sleep. I just can’t wait to get back. It’s a feeling of, that I do not belong here.”

“I have to go back and work,” said Garcia, “I have to get back, I will be back. Yes it’s very, very difficult feeling.”

Garcia says once his family is situated in Florida, he will return to Puerto Rico to help rebuild. He does not want to bring his immediate family back until that happens.

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EDUCATION

A Month After Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico Misses ‘Ambitious Target’ for Reopening Schools (The 74)

By Mark Keierleber | October 18, 2017

The 74

A month after Hurricane Maria devastated much of Puerto Rico, public schools on the island are slowly beginning to reopen — though classes haven’t resumed. Instead, the facilities are being used as community centers and shelters.

Puerto Rico’s education department had initially set a goal of having a majority of schools up and running by Monday, but that plan has now been scrapped.

In a column published Tuesday in The Hill, Puerto Rico’s education secretary, Julia Keleher, called a Monday reopening an “ambitious target,” noting that 167 schools had reopened so far. But many of the island’s 1,113 schools, which served roughly 350,000 students before the storm hit, were damaged beyond repair. Flocks of Puerto Rican children and educators have fled in recent weeks to the U.S. mainland.

“Despite scarce water and electricity, Puerto Rican students have been eager to get back to learning,” Keleher wrote.

By Wednesday, however, she acknowledged that her ambitious target was not attainable, the Associated Press reported, and the official start date for Puerto Rico’s schools was pushed back to Oct. 30 at the earliest.

On Wednesday, the number of schools opened as community centers was bumped up to 190, and an additional 99 buildings were being used as shelters for families displaced by the storm. For school buildings to reopen, they must be deemed structurally sound and have running water. Working electricity isn’t required.

After more than a month of missed school days following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the academic calendar has been extended from May 31 to July 15, and additional changes, including a lengthened school day, are under consideration.

"We must seize this opportunity to re-envision the future for Puerto Rico's youth," Keleher wrote in The Hill. "I am determined to see how we can not only get Puerto Rican children back on track, but also open up new opportunities for them along the way. I am committed to see how our educational system can build back better so that we make smart investments in the next generation."

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CHARITY / HUMAN INTEREST / VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

Video: Bringing Safe Water To The Families Of Puerto Rico (Operation Blessing International)

Oct. 18, 2017

[Operation Blessing International](#)

Many may think that the worst is now over for the people of Puerto Rico after they were struck by Hurricane Maria. But the truth is that the residents of this island have a long road ahead of them on their way back to normalcy. The biggest need on the island right now is access to safe water. That's where Operation Blessing steps in. We are utilizing all of our expertise and repertoire of tools to get safe, potable water to the families of Puerto Rico. Watch the video to learn more.

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Veterans deploy themselves to help Puerto Rico relief (CNN)

Warfighter Disaster Response Team fights red tape

By BILL WEIR AND RACHEL CLARKE , CNN

Posted: 12:23 AM, October 19, 2017 Updated: 1:54 AM, October 19, 2017

[CNN NewsSource](#)

MAYAGUEZ, Puerto Rico (CNN) - The cavalry is here, at an abandoned airport in the far west of Puerto Rico.

Not a traditional military unit, but a bunch of guys who call themselves the Warfighter Disaster Response Team.

They're veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and when they see a need, they just go. Red tape frustrates them, especially when people are hurting and they can help, so they deploy themselves -- for free.

They've made an abandoned airport in Mayaguez their base, bedding down here and using it to collect aid and work out how to get it to remote communities.

Eric Carlson, one of the volunteer first responders, gauges the impact they have had so far.

"I think we're up to 30,000 meals, 35,000 meals," he says. "And that just with the small trucks we have and by hook and by crook getting supplies."

Collecting food, water and medical resources, and getting them out to people is still a tall order in this remote part of the island so devastated by Hurricane Maria four weeks ago.

Mudslides are visible from the air all over this mountainous region. Roads have been washed away and, with little hope of repair crews coming any time soon, residents are doing what they can to build their own bridges.

So when Carlson and his comrades turn up to help, villagers remember them.

"They were beautiful people," says Jose Rodriguez with a smile. "They purified the water. They were drinking it right there."

Carlson isn't picking a fight with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (**FEMA**) or anyone trying to help, he just feels there are some simple, practical, sensible ways to do more.

"There is a lot of stuff getting done but it could've been done so much better if they just brought the National Guard," he says.

Rotate in guardsmen who are already committed to a two-week training deployment, he suggests; put them in planes flown by the Air National Guard that also has to get its hours in.

Just give the orders: "All you guys are getting on planes in rotations and going down to Puerto Rico, 15,000 at a time. Water purification units, construction units, engineers, you guys are all coming down every two weeks."

But in a nearby community -- across one of those treacherous mudslides -- we find a man with a different point of view.

Justo Hernandez, **FEMA's** deputy federal coordinating officer for this recovery, says he has no need for such reinforcements.

He says 4,500 National Guardsmen are coming in. And while the military presence in this US territory will be just a fraction of what the United States sent to Haiti after its devastating earthquake, any more could actually be damaging.

"We have all hands on deck at this time," Hernandez says. "I don't know how much more we can bring without impacting the economy of Puerto Rico.

"If I keep flooding the place with food and water, when are the local neighbors going to open the supermarkets?"

Still, he pledges that **FEMA** will be in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for as long as the recovery takes.

Back at the abandoned Mayaguez airport, suddenly things are humming.

Alongside the veterans are troops in more traditional uniforms. These are some of the National Guardsmen **FEMA's** Hernandez was talking about. Five hundred men who've been sitting at home in Tennessee and Kentucky for two weeks, just waiting for the call to grab their bags and get here.

More are coming, they say, as they unload supplies and get things organized.

This airport had already been commandeered, but now much-needed reinforcements are here too. Many people are waiting and relying on them.

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HURRICANE SEASON

If It Quacks Like A Hurricane: Time To Rethink 'Post-tropical Cyclone'

Terminology (Washington Post)

By Bryan Norcross

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2017

The author, Bryan Norcross, is senior hurricane specialist at The Weather Channel and author of "My Hurricane Andrew Story."

Hurricane-force winds from the freakishly strong Atlantic storm called Ophelia raked Ireland on Monday. At least three people died, roofs were ripped off and businesses and transportation shut down across the country. The Irish Meteorological Service had been talking about the storm for days, so residents and public officials were well-informed that an unusually strong windstorm was coming.

As Ophelia was on final approach to Ireland, the storm merged with a cold front and a robust upper-atmospheric disturbance, morphing into a strong so-called post-tropical cyclone with an atmospheric structure like a powerful nor'easter.

The National Hurricane Center dutifully changed the storm's name to Post-Tropical Cyclone Ophelia in its advisories, acknowledging the meteorological transition. According to the meteorological dictionary, Ophelia was indeed a post-tropical cyclone — an organized low-pressure system that originated in the tropics, but no longer had tropical characteristics, scientifically speaking.

We are confronted with the obvious question, however: Is Post-Tropical Cyclone Ophelia really the best name for a weather system that is forecast to hit land with hurricane-force winds? No. And this is not a theoretical question for us.

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy technically morphed into Post-Tropical Cyclone Sandy before it hit land and wreaked havoc on the most populated part of the United States.

At the Weather Channel, where I work, we thought that post-tropical felt too much like “post-danger,” so we switched the name to Superstorm Sandy the moment that the meteorologically accurate but innately less threatening-sounding post-tropical nomenclature took effect.

The Irish and the Brits handled Ophelia somewhat differently. This type of storm — though not as potent as Ophelia — frequently has an impact on the British Isles in the fall and winter. To elevate and coordinate public communications, the British and Irish meteorological services got together a couple of years ago and came up with a naming scheme for potentially disruptive storms. A typical version of this storm would have been called Storm Brian had it not been born out of Hurricane Ophelia. In these situations, the naming system wisely calls for carrying on with the tropical name. Brian was pushed onto the next storm, which is due over the weekend.

Some media outlets in Britain referred to the system as Storm Ophelia, adopting their standard winter-storm-naming paradigm. The government weather services generally called it Ex-Hurricane Ophelia, which elevated the threat above a typical winter storm — a smart move. Some Irish and British media went with the full Monty and used simply Hurricane Ophelia, aligning the name with the hurricane-force winds that were forecast.

To be clear, whenever a post-tropical cyclone has posed a threat to land, the National Hurricane Center's advisories and discussions have accurately and fully highlighted the danger. Most people, however, never see those bulletins, and increasingly the headline is the message. With the decline of websites and television — except in rare extreme events — and the ascent of mobile-phone apps as the platform of choice for public consumption of weather information, it has become increasingly important that the salient point of any weather alert is succinct, clear and fits on a mobile-phone screen.

The fact is, when Hurricane Ophelia linguistically morphed into Post-Tropical Cyclone Ophelia in National Hurricane Center bulletins, the intrinsic colloquial message was that the storm had been downgraded. The meteorological dictionary might say otherwise, but that's what people thought, and will always think.

Words matter. And if the words imply a message that is not intended, they need to be reevaluated.

The solution is to separate the nomenclature used to label a storm from its technical meteorological status. Currently, the name of the storm describes the bucket in which the weather system resides. Those buckets are differentiated by the strength of the strongest winds in the storm, the organization of the circulation, and the energy source by which the storms run — tropical and northern storms run off different meteorological processes. When a storm moves from one meteorological bucket to another, the name changes, even though the threat to land may not. Therein lies the issue.

A more modern system, which takes into account the short-form nature of mobile-phone communications, would be to retain the hurricane label through a transition to technical post-tropical-cyclone status if the storm still presents the threat of hurricane conditions on land. The meteorological transition would be noted in the text of the bulletin, of course, allowing for verification after the fact, but the unintended consequence of renaming a storm with a continuing hurricane-wind hazard to something that sounds less threatening would be removed.

Hurricane Ophelia would have remained Hurricane Ophelia until there was no longer a threat to land from hurricane-force winds. Hurricane Sandy would have remained Hurricane Sandy through landfall.

While it seems obvious that maintaining the hurricane label fits the Ophelia and Sandy scenarios, there are other situations that are less clear. Mother Nature's storms don't always fit nicely into our buckets. But the underlying premise is an important rule for modern communications. The name and the headline must

substantially convey the threat from the storm to a user without an understanding of the meteorological technicalities. Otherwise, the weather alerts will be blunted at best and probably misunderstood.

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OPINION

Mike Tighe: Another reason to help Puerto Ricans: Our lives depend on them (LaCrosse Tribune)

By Mike Tighe

Oct. 19, 2017

[LaCrosse \(Wis\) Tribune](#) Now that more of the truth is out, let the record show that Puerto Ricans aren't just slugs waiting for federal handouts but rather, they are an industrious sort who produce a lot of medical supplies to keep mainland Americans alive and kicking.

Indeed, mainland U.S. shortages of vital medical supplies manufactured in Puerto Rico could amount to karmic twists to the federal government's lackadaisical initial response to the deadly destruction visited upon the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico from hurricanes Irma and Maria just two weeks apart last month.

Many attributed the initial foot-dragging aid to the fact that many mainlanders didn't even know that the Caribbean islanders are, indeed, Americans — even those who had ventured there for sun-kissed vacation.

Others suggested that racism was at the root of the less enthusiastic response to help Puerto Ricans and Virgin Islanders than, for instance, the rushes of assistance to Texas, Louisiana or Florida, based on the assumption that the islands' populations are predominantly black.

Actually, 80.5 percent of the residents of Puerto Rico are white, mostly of Spanish origin; 8 percent are black; 0.4 percent, Amerindian; 0.2 percent Asian; and 10.9 percent other. That statistic flips for the Virgin Islands, with 76 percent black, 15.7 percent white, 1.4 percent Asian, 2.1 percent mixed and 4.9 percent other.

Still others, including the president of the Virgin Islands, blamed the victims for their own plight, with President Donald Trump stating flatly in a tweet on Sept. 30: "They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort."

At the time, "they" were struggling to survive with no electricity, little water and even less food to sustain them as they went about helping each other get by in a community effort.

Although recovery efforts have redoubled since then, the two U.S. territories remain mired as death tolls mount and relief supplies have yet to get to many rural areas and otherwise inaccessible areas.

Isn't it ironic, then, that mainland hospitals are facing increasing shortages of saline IV bags, on top of deficits that existed for several years even before the hurricanes raked the islands?

The Food and Drug Administration announced on Friday that it is working with Baxter International, a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Deerfield, Ill., to "prevent a significant shortfall of production of Baxter's sodium chloride 0.9% injection bags from its Puerto Rico facility."

In response to my request for comment, a Baxter official responded in an email that the company's production has not been the culprit for the previous dearth of IV bags. Baxter's three Puerto Rican facilities manufacture smaller bags than those, he said.

Going forward, though, Hurricane Maria's effect on Baxter plants' production may become part of the problem, although the company is trying to make it part of the solution.

In a release, Baxter said its Puerto Rican plants sustained minimal structural damage from Maria, and limited production resumed within a week of the storm. That production, however, relies on diesel generators because Puerto Rico's electricity grid remains largely ineffective, with sporadic service.

A majority of Baxter's more than 2,000 employees in Puerto Rico have returned to work, and the Baxter Foundation and employees have donated more than \$3.5 million toward recovery efforts not only in Puerto Rico

but also in other hurricane-afflicted areas in southern and eastern states on the continent, according to the company.

In advance of the hurricane, Baxter moved finished products off of the island to secure storage on the mainland, the company said. It also has received temporary regulatory discretion from the FDA allowing it to import some products from Baxter facilities in Ireland and Australia to buoy its U.S. supplies.

The potential shortage is a concern for local hospitals.

Although the falling dominoes haven't affected the supply cabinets at Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse and its affiliates, "We are aware of what is taking place, and we have been monitoring" the situation, a spokesman said.

Mayo-Franciscan officials are working with Mayo Clinic Health System headquarters in Rochester, Minn., to develop contingency plans, he said. They also have adjusted clinical practices to minimize any impact on patients if supplies become pinched.

In addition to concerns about and efforts to contain health threats on the islands from stagnant, dirty water and the fact that some residents are drinking contaminated water, the FDA also sounded the alarm about the potential for shortages of critical medicines in Puerto Rican plants.

"The medical product industry has a large presence in Puerto Rico, with dozens of drug and device manufacturing facilities that are responsible for the production of products — like cancer drugs, immunosuppressants used by transplant patients and devices needed for people with diabetes," according to a statement from FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb.

"We have undertaken swift and extensive efforts to prevent or limit the loss or shortage of multiple drugs critical to American patients due to the challenges related to refrigeration, storage and transportation," he said.

The FDA continues efforts to "help avoid catastrophic drug shortages," Gottlieb insisted.

It's not too late for us to acknowledge that, instead of being freeloaders, residents of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are true, blue Americans who fly the same flag hoisted above federal, state and local buildings throughout the U.S. — not to mention NFL stadiums, NHL hockey rinks, NASCAR tracks and sundry other venues.

Let's assume that Trump's lip slipped when he told the Values Voter Summit in Washington last weekend: "I will tell you, I left Texas, and I left Florida, and I left Louisiana and I went to Puerto Rico — and I met with the president of the Virgin Islands."

This meme is circulating on the internet as a joke about President Donald Trump's verbal slip in saying he had talked to the president of the U.S. Virgin Islands about hurricane damage. He actually is the Virgin Islands president, by virtue of his being president of the United States.

Surely, he was referring to Virgin Islands Gov. Kenneth Mapp, instead of implying that he was meeting with himself, as internet memes suggest and, indeed, as he indicated during the campaign that one of his main consultants is none other than himself.

Let's also assume that we need the islanders as much for life as they need us for recovery. Maybe that will ramp up our concern and assistance, eh?

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Trump can't stop complaining about Puerto Rico. And it shows in his policies.

(Washington Post)

The island doesn't need new loans. It needs competent hurricane relief.

By Armando Valdés Prieto October 19 at 6:00 AM

[Washington Post](#)

Armando Valdés Prieto is a lawyer and political consultant and a former director of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Office of Management and Budget. In that capacity, he was also the governor's authorized representative to the Federal Emergency Management Authority.

President Trump's approach to Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria has been coherently inhumane. He has called some Puerto Rican leaders "politically motivated ingrates," made insensitive references to how much federal money is being spent on recovery, refused to support equitable health-care access for the island's 3.5 million U.S. citizens, bemoaned on Twitter how federal personnel could not be in the commonwealth after the hurricane "forever" and this week complained from the Rose Garden that the military is distributing food, "something that really they shouldn't have to be doing."

Only one notable deviation from this narrative stands out. While on his official trip to the island, Trump told Fox News correspondent Geraldo Rivera that Puerto Rican governments "owe a lot of money to your friends on Wall Street, and we're going to have to wipe that out. You can say goodbye to that." Hours later, the White House was back on track: "I wouldn't take it word for word," said Mick Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget.

A week later, congressional Republicans unveiled a relief plan that would only add to the island's debt load.

The disjointed thread of off-the-cuff commentary Trump has issued in real time and on social media since the storm reveals either the president's profound ignorance or his deep-seated prejudices. He seems fully unaware of the United States' history of involvement in Puerto Rico; the nation took the island as booty after the Spanish-American War in 1898 and made us citizens without consulting our forebears in 1917, just one month before the country's entry into World War I. For decades, the U.S. military was here — seemingly forever — using two small but inhabited islands as live ordnance ranges for the Navy. Trump, however, seems to believe that Puerto Rico is a foreign jurisdiction and hence, in his mind, U.S. tax dollars should not be spent to prop up the island's fragile health-care system nor to save lives and rebuild in the aftermath of a major hurricane.

But if he is in fact aware of our standing as citizens — which he certainly should be — then perhaps he is simply treating Puerto Ricans as he has women, other Latinos, African Americans, Muslims, people with disabilities and any number of other groups.

Unfortunately, the administration's actions have been entirely consistent with the president's disdainful remarks. The federal government's response has been lethargic. Last week, I interviewed the Aqueduct and Sewer Authority president on San Juan radio station NotiUno. He informed me that of 150 backup generators he had requested from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the day of the storm to keep potable water flowing into homes, only 17 had been installed in the 20 days that followed. So never mind Trump's statement on Monday that "Puerto Rico now has more generators, I believe, than any place in the world. There are generators all over the place."

Worst of all is how Washington is adding to Puerto Rico's debt burden, even after Trump's confounding remarks about it. Congress is moving to approve legislation that, although it does provide some money for recovery, includes a \$4.9 billion loan to shore up the island's liquidity. Otherwise, due to long-standing fiscal problems and the near-total collapse of the economy since the hurricane, the commonwealth and some local governments are expected to run out of money in the next few weeks.

Nonetheless, even with the loan, Puerto Rico's nonvoting representative in Congress, Jenniffer González-Colón (R), stated that the government would only be able to sustain its operations through the end of this year. So while the money is needed, the fact that it must eventually be paid back and that it is only a very short-term fix complicates future prospects and ignores deep-seated problems that need careful attention now. With over \$70 billion in debt, no reasonable means to pay it down, a dwindling population, a devastated economy and a shrinking tax base, sending this loan our way is like throwing a drowning man a gallon of water and expecting him to use it as a flotation device.

Sadly, that is what Puerto Rico has become: an island drowning in an ocean — "a very big ocean," to quote the president — of debt, incompetence and indifference.

Armando Valdés Prieto is a lawyer and political consultant and a former director of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Office of Management and Budget. In that capacity, he was also the governor's authorized representative to the Federal Emergency Management Authority.

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Hurricane Maria's Effects on Young Children in Puerto Rico (Center for American Progress)

By Cristina Novoa

October 16, 2017, 9:00 am

[Center for American Progress](#)

Puerto Rico is home to nearly 175,000 U.S. citizen children aged birth to 4 years old. More than half of these children live below the federal poverty level. Much like in the rest of the United States, young children in Puerto Rico are most likely to live in families that are barely able to meet their basic needs. Early childhood is a critical period of development. However, without access to nutritious food, safe housing, and quality medical care, young children living in poverty can quickly fall behind their more economically advantaged peers.

Regardless of family income, all children in Puerto Rico find themselves in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria—the strongest storm to hit the island in a lifetime. The effects of poverty, combined with the trauma of living through a natural disaster, will not fade away easily: The experiences that Puerto Rico's young children have now will directly influence their long-term physical, cognitive, and emotional development.

This column describes four critical areas of government support on which many Puerto Rican children depend.

Food assistance and security

Nutritious food is a basic need, providing the fuel that young brains and bodies require to develop. Poor nutrition and hunger are especially devastating to infants and toddlers, often leading to developmental delays in areas like language and motor skills; social and behavioral acuity; and educational advancement.

Puerto Rico imports 85 percent of its food, making food security tenuous even in the best of circumstances.

Although, in recent years, Puerto Rico has made efforts to boost food security—increasing agriculture production by 24 percent—Hurricane Maria wiped out the majority of crops overnight.

In response to Hurricane Maria, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is increasing flexibility for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which provides nutrition assistance to infants and toddlers. In 2015, 165,042 Puerto Rican women and their children participated in WIC. Threats to WIC jeopardize children's health; future academic achievement; and long-term health and economic outcomes.

The U.S. Department of Defense reports that clean water is becoming scarce; 55 percent of Puerto Ricans lack clean drinking water, a week after the storm.

Housing

Children need safe and stable housing to thrive. Housing instability and homelessness in early childhood are associated with poorer outcomes in language, literacy, and social-emotional development. Unfortunately, Puerto Rico's housing stock has been devastated.

Prior to Hurricane Maria, 31 percent of Puerto Rican children lived in households with a high housing burden—households that spent at least one-third of income on housing. When housing consumes one-third or more of a family's income, it becomes less likely that the family will be able to meet all of its children's basic needs, and it increases the threat of eviction.

Emerging reports paint a grim picture of housing conditions in Puerto Rico after the storm. Photos show entire communities with roofs torn off; news reports profile high rates of homelessness and displacement; and satellite images show widespread power outages.

Whether due to Hurricane Maria or earlier housing instability, threats to housing are devastating for children's health. Housing insecurity is associated with poor health, lower weight, and developmental risk among infants and toddlers.

Health and medical care

Regular medical care and developmental screenings help children stay healthy. Unfortunately, severe damage to Puerto Rico's medical facilities—paired with the federal government's historical underinvestment in Medicaid—has limited children's access to the care they need. The situation demands immediate action.

As of June 2015, almost half of Puerto Rico’s population was enrolled in Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Children depend on this coverage for health screenings and treatment, which will be crucial to hurricane recovery efforts.

Early education

High-quality early education can help children develop critical skills like social-emotional regulation and communication, which promote lifelong learning. In post-disaster settings, returning to school can represent a return to order and familiarity. The re-establishment of schools and child care programs—including Early Head Start and Head Start centers—is one of the practices that is most highly endorsed by humanitarian agency leaders with disaster experience.

As of 2015, 7,900 Puerto Rican children had child care subsidies. Yet without homes or centers, these are useless; families won’t be able to return to work without first rebuilding infrastructure.

Puerto Rico is home to 39 Head Start and 44 Early Head Start programs, which, together, provide quality child care and early education to 35,093. In the wake of Hurricane Maria, these centers will need to be rebuilt.

In the short term, Congress should provide resources to implement home-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs, which deliver services to children where they are living. This can be a crucial way in which it can expand service. In 2016, only 5 percent of Puerto Rican children under age 3 had access to Early Head Start, and only 46 percent of children ages 3 to 5 had access to Head Start.

Head Start has a precedent of addressing mental health needs in the face of disaster. In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, the Office of Head Start worked with Head Start and Early Head Start directors in order to identify the mental health needs impacting children, families, and the community.

Conclusion

As days turn into weeks since Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, it is important to remember that delaying aid has serious consequences for young children during a critical developmental period. We know what children need; it is up to Congress and the current administration to take action.

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Helping Puerto Rico in both the short and long term (The Hill and AEI)

Benjamin Zycher

October 17, 2017 | The Hill

[AEI and The Hill](#)

Given the severe fiscal pressures facing Puerto Rico — about \$72 billion in debt — and the destruction wrought by Hurricane Maria, it is absolutely appropriate that substantial federal aid be defined and delivered by policymakers in Washington.

Accordingly, on Oct. 12, the House passed a bill including a federal loan of \$4.9 billion for Puerto Rico as part of \$36.5 billion in hurricane and wildfire relief for several states. The Senate is expected to pass the bill this week.

At the same time, policymaking is political, and the temptation to use legislation and its implementation to transfer wealth is powerful. Aid can be structured in different ways, and the longer-term effects of alternative loan provisions in particular are likely to yield very different impacts in the context of the future creditworthiness of the commonwealth and the incentives for crucial policy reforms.

Witness the recent argument from President Trump that the massive debts owed by the commonwealth will have to be “wipe[d] out.”

The president does not have the authority to effect that sort of outcome, but it is possible that the legislation eventually emerging from Congress might subordinate existing debts to the forthcoming federal loan; or the procedural implementation of the loan by federal agencies might have that effect as a practical matter.

A young girl looks back after getting her shoe stuck in the mud while carrying supplies delivered by soldiers working with a 101st Airborne Division “Dustoff” unit during recovery efforts following Hurricane Maria in Jayuya, Puerto Rico, October 5, 2017. Picture taken October 5, 2017. REUTERS/Lucas Jackson

Those threats have been directed at Wall Street, but the reality is that the creditors include retirement funds invested in Puerto Rico bonds, including tens of thousands of investors living on the island.

Subordination would be an enormous mistake imposing substantial adverse effects upon the commonwealth itself over the longer term. Consider the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), the bonded debt of which is about \$9 billion.

If the legislation eventually to be enacted subordinates Puerto Rico's existing bondholders, that outcome would not be very different from the treatment of the General Motors and Chrysler creditors in 2009, when the Chrysler secured creditors were coerced into accepting not only far less than their legitimate claims, but fewer cents on the dollar than the GM secured creditors and the pension plans of the United Auto Workers, unsecured but vastly more favored politically.

Such subordination would be perverse in several dimensions. First, it would ignore the recent history of concessions made by the PREPA creditors, who reached a restructuring agreement with two different administrations of the Puerto Rico government.

That agreement provided debt relief of \$1.7 billion over the first five years and at least \$2 billion in the first 10 years. That deal was three years in the making, but in the end was scuttled by commonwealth officials.

As the devastation from Maria unfolded, the creditors offered a \$1-billion loan in exchange for some assurance that a portion of the debt would be paid, an offer angrily rejected by the Puerto Rico government even as the electric grid remained inoperative for almost the entire island.

Incentives for future creditors to make concessions during periods of fiscal stringency are unlikely to be strengthened by preemptive assaults on their positions.

Even before Maria, PREPA faced very large needs for capital investment for new generating plants, improved transmission and distribution networks and tightened environmental requirements. Those investment needs will require access to capital markets on terms that are affordable for future PREPA ratepayers

But that longer-term goal is inconsistent with the recent demands for ever-greater concessions from the PREPA creditors, and now with the "kiss that money goodbye" rhetoric emanating from the White House and elsewhere.

Because congressional action was required to overcome political constraints in the commonwealth, a compromise in 2016 between Congress and the Obama administration — the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) — created an oversight board with debt-restructuring powers and a formal legal process to deal with emerging disputes between the creditors and commonwealth debtors.

Subordination of existing debts would shunt these procedural safeguards aside, with future effects in terms of market expectations and incentives that cannot be salutary.

No one denies that PREPA has been mismanaged for many years. Accounts receivables practices are widely acknowledged to be dismal. PREPA gives vast amounts of power to local government agencies essentially at no charge, yielding enormous waste and upward pressure on rates for the remaining ratepayers.

Incentives to correct such practices will not be strengthened if debt service becomes easier, rather than harder to avoid, and an implementation of a subordination provision would do precisely that.

That mismanagement seems to have afflicted the PREPA response to Maria as well. Department of Energy Situation Reports on six previous hurricanes (Harvey, Irene, Irma, Katrina, Matthew and Sandy), as well as other data, show that the average number of days needed to restore power to 90 percent of customers was 10 days.

For PREPA after Maria, about 5 percent of customers were restored after 10 days, and only 10 percent of customers after 15 days. Governor Ricardo A. Rosselló recently expressed an "expectation" for 25 percent within a month.

Perhaps conditions on the island fundamentally are more adverse than in the other afflicted regions. To the extent that that is true, it is unclear why PREPA chose not to accept aid from the American Public Power Association, the normal process for such emergencies.

Instead, PREPA hired a little-known outside contractor with limited relevant experience to restore the power lines. Whatever the realities on the ground, subordination of existing Puerto Rico debts would reduce the willingness of the capital market to invest in modernization, for PREPA and for the commonwealth more generally.

The U.S. Senate and the Trump administration should resist this temptation in Puerto Rico's long-term interest.

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From:	Hildebrand, Rachel </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=6BEE456810014918AB3D35984A984AFD-HILDEBRAND,>
To:	"Evancho, Mary </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=5363e0f8c6584957b15d86e2e06925a7-Evancho, Mo>"; "Smith, Heather R </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=9177866a1bf84fd8a525e3bdb6837e40-Smith, Heat>"; "Rodriguez lozano, Carlos </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6c63d1ca5f4445618b822c10d89d2145-Rodriguez l>"; "Tribble, Ahsha </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=96fa7cb342594f748cd478660e4ad348-Tribble, Ah>"
CC:	"Morales, Ana </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=a83a17c064694c33836a565f083aad9d-Morales, An>"; "Buda, Kristin </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f1941a4455ad476081a7a301b94228e5-kristin.bud>"; "Stronach, Howard </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f0f19c60d5004a728eb38186ad92f4a0-Stronach, H>"
Subject:	Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)
Date:	2017/10/08 09:55:21
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Absolutely, but we need to start with PREPA.

Carlos, Ahsha,

Please discuss with PREPA whether they want the assistance below.

Heather,

Who can PREPA coordinate with to obtain additional info?

Sent from Email+ secured by MobileIron

From: "Evancho, Mary" <mary.evancho@fema.dhs.gov>

Date: Sunday, October 8, 2017 at 9:34:39 AM

To: "Hildebrand, Rachel" <Rachel.Hildebrand@fema.dhs.gov>, "Smith, Heather R" <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>

Cc: "Morales, Ana" <Ana.Morales@fema.dhs.gov>, "Buda, Kristin" <[\(b\)\(6\)@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov)>, "Stronach, Howard" <Howard.Stronach@fema.dhs.gov>

Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

I agree but I believe they would need some contract/written agreement and we would pay based on terms if that agreement

Sent from Email+ secured by MobileIron

From: "Hildebrand, Rachel" <Rachel.Hildebrand@fema.dhs.gov>

Date: Sunday, October 8, 2017 at 9:22:18 AM

To: "Smith, Heather R" <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>, "Evancho, Mary" <mary.evancho@fema.dhs.gov>

Cc: "Morales, Ana" <Ana.Morales@fema.dhs.gov>, "Buda, Kristin" <(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov>, "Stronach, Howard" <Howard.Stronach@fema.dhs.gov>

Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

It's 100% funding so I think PREPA could pay travel costs and we can reimburse under PA. Howard?

Sent from Email+ secured by MobileIron

From: "Smith, Heather R" <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>

Date: Sunday, October 8, 2017 at 9:05:41 AM

To: "Hildebrand, Rachel" <Rachel.Hildebrand@fema.dhs.gov>, "Evancho, Mary" <mary.evancho@fema.dhs.gov>

Cc: "Morales, Ana" <Ana.Morales@fema.dhs.gov>, "Buda, Kristin" <(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov>

Subject: RE: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Whether we can take power company employees to support PR -- and they are volunteering 2,000 hours of effort.

Heather Smith

Recovery Division Director

FEMA Region 2

202-380-2339 cell

From: Hildebrand, Rachel

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 11:05:25 PM

To: Smith, Heather R; Evancho, Mary

Cc: Morales, Ana; Buda, Kristin

Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

I don't understand what's being requested?

Sent from Email+ secured by MobileIron

From: "Smith, Heather R" <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>

Date: Saturday, October 7, 2017 at 8:25:00 PM

To: "Evancho, Mary" <mary.evancho@fema.dhs.gov>, "Hildebrand, Rachel" <Rachel.Hildebrand@fema.dhs.gov>

Cc: "Morales, Ana" <Ana.Morales@fema.dhs.gov>, "Buda, Kristin" (b)(6) <[@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: @hq.dhs.gov)>

Subject: FW: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Can we do this from a policy perspective? If we figure out how to get them on-board?

From: Tribble, Ahsha

Sent: Saturday, October 07, 2017 8:21 PM

To: Smith, Heather R <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>; Niedernhofer, Nancy <Nancy.Niedernhofer@fema.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

SA...volunteer

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hickey, Evermary (b)(6)@pge.com>

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 5:04:45 PM

To: Tribble, Ahsha

Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Good back in California. Remember, PG&E is willing to volunteer 2k hours of effort . Probably not a lot but a small management team might help with logistics or planning. And stay safe and healthy out there.

Evermary Hickey, Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response Support|

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

77 Beale Street<x-apple-data-detectors://2/1>B28R, San Francisco, CA 94105<x-apple-data-detectors://3/0>

Office 415-973-3344<tel:415-973-3344>|

(b)(6)@pge.com<<mailto:%C2%A0emhp@pge.com>>

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 7, 2017, at 3:33 PM, Tribble, Ahsha

<ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov<<mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov>>>wrote:

*****CAUTION: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Think before clicking links or opening attachments.*****

Working hard. This is a tough environment. But doing okay. How are you?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hickey, Evermary (b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com>>

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 3:31:53 PM

To: Tribble, Ahsha

Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

I hope you're doing ok. Take care of yourself.

Evermary Hickey, Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response Support|

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

77 Beale Street<x-apple-data-detectors://2/1>B28R, San Francisco, CA 94105<x-apple-data-detectors://3/0>

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(b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:%C2%A0emhp@pge.com>

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 7, 2017, at 3:18 PM, Tribble, Ahsha
<ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov<mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov><mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov>>>wrote:

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Hi - the process at this point is to bid on contracts through USACE for emergency work. PREPA didn't do EMAC from my understanding. Next step is permanent work, but we haven't gotten that far. Priority is emergency restoration.

-----Original Message-----

From: Hickey, Evermary [[mailto:\(b\)\(6\)@pge.com](mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com)]

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 5:55 PM

To: Tribble, Ahsha
<ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov<mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov><mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov>>

Subject: Fwd: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Hi Ahsha. Hope all is going well. Seems that assistance from IOUs will not be requested.

Ev

Evermary Hickey, Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response Support| Pacific Gas and Electric Company

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[mailto:\(b\)\(6\)@pge.com](mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com)<[mailto:\(b\)\(6\)@pge.com](mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com)><<mailto:emhp@pge.com>><<mailto:%C2%A0emhp@pge.com>><<mailto:A0emhp@pge.com>>>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@eei.org<mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org><mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org><mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org><mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org>>>

Date: October 7, 2017 at 2:47:38 PM PDT

To:
(b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com>>>

Subject: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

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The ESCC continues to coordinate closely with government partners and across the sector in support of the American Public Power Association (APPA) and its members in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and is monitoring and preparing for any potential impacts from Hurricane Nate.

Hurricane Nate

Situation Update

As of 2 p.m. EDT, Hurricane Nate was located about 195 miles south of Biloxi, MS, and was moving rapidly to the north-northwest at 25 MPH. Currently, Nate has maximum sustained winds near 90 mph, with higher gusts. Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 35 miles, primarily to the east of the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 125 miles.

The storm is beginning to impact portions of the U.S. Gulf Coast, and it is expected to make landfall near the Louisiana-Alabama border later this evening or early-Sunday as a category 2 hurricane.

A Hurricane Warning has been issued for New Orleans and Lake Pontchartrain, and for areas between Grand Isle, LA, and the Alabama/Florida border. A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for Lake Maurepas, West of Grand Isle to Morgan City Louisiana, and east of the Alabama/Florida border to Indian Pass Florida.

Nate is expected to produce 3 to 6 inches of rain, with maximum amounts of 10 inches, from the central Gulf Coast to Appalachians through the weekend, resulting in the possibility of flash flooding in these areas.

Life-threatening storm surge flooding is expected with Storm Surge Warnings in effect from Morgan City, Louisiana, to the Okaloosa/Walton County Line Florida and northern and western shores of Lake Pontchartrain

[cid:image001.jpg@01D33F93.844FC8C0]

Industry-Government Activities

The ESCC Leadership and CEOs of potentially affected companies held a call Thursday afternoon to ensure all resource needs were met and that industry leadership stayed coordinated. The ESCC Secretariat and the industry trade associations are holding daily coordination calls with DOE to discuss the Puerto Rico and USVI restoration/rebuild efforts and preparations for Hurricane Nate. These calls will continue through the weekend and into next week, as warranted.

Electric companies in Nate's path have activated their emergency response plans, are prepositioning crews and equipment, and are mobilizing workers to respond to any power outages, as soon as it is safe to work. Industry mutual assistance networks are activated, and initial calls have taken place with companies to develop estimates for equipment/personnel needs associated with the expected response mission. All mutual assistance networks are reporting that there are no unmet resource needs at this time.

Last night, the President signed an emergency disaster declaration to supplement state, tribal, and local response efforts in Louisiana.

Hurricane Maria

Situation Update

The situation on the islands remains logistically challenging, but is improving. The primary focus continues to be the distribution of commodities such as food, water

distribution, and fuel for temporary power at critical facilities, as well as improving security, debris removal, and road clearing measures. With the situation in Puerto Rico stabilizing, the focus is shifting to the long-duration restoration and rebuild of its critical infrastructure.

The majority of electricity customers in Puerto Rico and the USVI remain without power. In Puerto Rico, there is 125MW of generation online, and nearly 12 percent of customers have had power restored. Service also has been restored to 34 hospitals in Puerto Rico.

According to the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), crews energized several 230 and 130 kV lines this week. This weekend, crews from Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) will be arriving on the island to join the restoration effort. Industry is coordinating with DOE, FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and PREPA to identify additional resource needs.

Yesterday, Vice President Pence traveled to Puerto Rico to receive an on-the-ground briefing and to see firsthand the destruction of the island caused by hurricane Maria. Today, a congressional delegation traveled to Puerto Rico to survey the damage.

In the USVI, electric service has been restored to nearly 15% of customers on St. Thomas and 12% of customers on St. Croix, including critical facilities such as the airports and hospitals. No customers are receiving power on St. John, and only facilities with generators have power. A team from the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) is providing mutual aid on St. Thomas. A second team from DOE-WAPA arrived on September 29, and more crews and resources are expected to arrive on October 13.

Industry & Government Activities (NEW DEVELOPMENTS)

The federal government increasingly is supporting response efforts, working directly with authorities on the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, including with municipalities, businesses, and voluntary agencies on the islands.

FEMA has assigned the power restoration mission to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and now is seeking a general contractor to support them. This contract will be awarded by Tuesday, if not earlier and will be the first of three major contracts totaling more than \$400 million for general contracting work that will support the restoration efforts already underway in Puerto Rico.

USACE remains in daily contact with DOE, FEMA, APPA, the ESCC, and PREPA to coordinate plans and to leverage support from government or mainland industry partners. In the meantime, PREPA crews continue to work with Whitefish Energy Holdings, as well as with JEA and New York Power Authority crews already on the island.

USACE temporary power response teams continue to assess power needs and install generators at critical facilities. As of October 7, USACE installed 33 generators at critical facilities in Puerto Rico, powering critical infrastructure including hospitals and shelters. As of October 7, USACE installed 41 generators in USVI.

Unity of Message / Additional Resources

Given the continued restoration activities, both on the islands and in response to Hurricane Nate, below please find examples of messaging from APPA, DOE, and EEI. We also are aware of media requests regarding misinformation on the role of mutual assistance and mainland resources. The APPA FAQ was designed to provide additional ground truth, and APPA's press office continues to try to set the record straight amidst myriad inquiries.

* DOE is producing regular situation reports, which include additional information on the response efforts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as preparations for Hurricane Nate. These reports can be found at:

<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A-www.energy.gov/oe/downloads/hurricanes-2Dnate-2Dmaria-2Dirma-2Dand-2Dharvey-2Dsituation->

[2Dreports&d=DwIFAg&c=Oo_p3A70ldcR7Q3zeyon7Q&r=scdm7ioPOYYVhqPme17xGBA&m=hY7fejEVaAcR-nCqeNrkcCp_bkXPtKL_RcmcZZpWPFs&s=CCEXK_ylqgWui7mntJAikIkQEdwlZutDEBYZi6ynhSo&e=<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.mmsend42.com_link.cfm-3Fr-3DmpHv5BdKAaLUC3B1BZ0EUQ-7E-7E-26pe-3Dv-2DG4oPawaFCfkMO58c8WLbEn0lofL9CPke5yfob5TOV9gd8gTs7qcF2JrfJWan8S&d=DwMFaQ&c=Oo_p3A70ldcR7Q3zeyon7Q&r=scdm7ioPOYYVhqPme17xGBA&m=1L6QdXHgsPpzBGiuEu7cDG5tmRnD5jGY_sAE3fzSj5s&s=NTlxy2jY2uyF-3NHh_H3mxIwkMuoX2ziCQAMraxGyrg&e=>](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.mmsend42.com_link.cfm-3Fr-3DmpHv5BdKAaLUC3B1BZ0EUQ-7E-7E-26pe-3Dv-2DG4oPawaFCfkMO58c8WLbEn0lofL9CPke5yfob5TOV9gd8gTs7qcF2JrfJWan8S&d=DwMFaQ&c=Oo_p3A70ldcR7Q3zeyon7Q&r=scdm7ioPOYYVhqPme17xGBA&m=1L6QdXHgsPpzBGiuEu7cDG5tmRnD5jGY_sAE3fzSj5s&s=NTlxy2jY2uyF-3NHh_H3mxIwkMuoX2ziCQAMraxGyrg&e=>)

* American Public Power Association's Hurricane Maria Restoration Efforts: FAQs (10/6/2017) - [see link below]

* Edison Electric Institute Hurricane Nate Talking Points (10/7/2017) - [see link below]

Thank you again to all who have offered their support and assistance. We will be working with mutual assistance teams across the industry to address any needs identified by partners on the ground in both Puerto Rico, the USVI, and states impacted by Hurricane Nate.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Secretariat if you have any questions. We will be in full coordination mode with each other and government partners for as long as necessary.

ESCC Secretariat Contact Info

APPA

(b)(6)
(b)(6)@publicpower.org<mailto:(b)(6)@publicpower.org><mailto:(b)(6)@publicpower.org><mailto:(b)(6)@publicpower.org><mailto:(b)(6)@publicpower.org>

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EI

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* Nate_Talkers_10072017.pdf<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.mmsend42.com_link.cfm-3Fr-3DmpHv5BdKAaLUC3B1BZ0EUQ-7E-7E-

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* FAQs_Oct_6.pdf<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.mmsend42.com_link.cfm-3Fr-3DmpHv5BdKAaLUC3B1BZ0EUQ-7E-7E-26pe-3DTWf6IpFLbd7bDdZvEzXR6JkHghnAETKFX8jD90aUkhamg-2DZgR2-5FqeROHH33CRA1S&d=DwMFaQ&c=Oo_p3A70ldcR7Q3zeyon7Q&r=scdm7ioPQYVhqPme17xGBA&m=1L6QdXHgsPpzBGiuEu7cDG5tmRnD5jGY_sAE3fzSj5s&s=IyV LSPj9M4iq09CZ0d3QlJ3q1kfyzuHY8dyT0Nz0iq0&e=>

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]

Sender:	Hildebrand, Rachel </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=6BEE456810014918AB3D35984A984AFD-HILDEBRAND,>
Recipient:	"Evancho, Mary </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=5363e0f8c6584957b15d86e2e06925a7-Evancho, Mo>"; "Smith, Heather R </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=9177866a1bf84fd8a525e3bdb6837e40-Smith, Heat>"; "Rodriguez lozano, Carlos </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6c63d1ca5f4445618b822c10d89d2145-Rodriguez l>"; "Tribble, Ahsha </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=96fa7cb342594f748cd478660e4ad348-Tribble, Ah>"; "Morales, Ana </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=a83a17c064694c33836a565f083aad9d-Morales, An>"; "Buda, Kristin </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f1941a4455ad476081a7a301b94228e5-kristin.bud>"; "Stronach, Howard </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f0f19c60d5004a728eb38186ad92f4a0-Stronach, H>"
Sent Date:	2017/10/08 09:55:18

Delivered Date: 2017/10/08 09:55:21
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From:	Evancho, Mary </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=5363E0F8C6584957B15D86E2E06925A7-EVANCHO, MO>
To:	"Smith, Heather R </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=9177866a1bf84fd8a525e3bdb6837e40-Smith, Heat>"; "Hildebrand, Rachel </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6bee456810014918ab3d35984a984afd-Hildebrand,>"
CC:	"Morales, Ana </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=a83a17c064694c33836a565f083aad9d-Morales, An>"; "Buda, Kristin </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f1941a4455ad476081a7a301b94228e5-kristin.bud>"
Subject:	Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)
Date:	2017/10/08 09:16:24
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

If they are volunteering, I see no issue. If they want FEMA to pay for travel expenses or anything else, PREPA would have to enter in to some kind of contract with them

Sent from Email+ secured by MobileIron

From: "Smith, Heather R" <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>

Date: Sunday, October 8, 2017 at 9:05:42 AM

To: "Hildebrand, Rachel" <Rachel.Hildebrand@fema.dhs.gov>, "Evancho, Mary" <mary.evancho@fema.dhs.gov>

Cc: "Morales, Ana" <Ana.Morales@fema.dhs.gov>, "Buda, Kristin" <[\(b\)\(6\)@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov)>

Subject: RE: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Whether we can take power company employees to support PR -- and they are volunteering 2,000 hours of effort.

Heather Smith

Recovery Division Director

FEMA Region 2

202-380-2339 cell

From: Hildebrand, Rachel

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 11:05:25 PM

To: Smith, Heather R; Evancho, Mary

Cc: Morales, Ana; Buda, Kristin

Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

I don't understand what's being requested?

Sent from Email+ secured by MobileIron

From: "Smith, Heather R" <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>

Date: Saturday, October 7, 2017 at 8:25:00 PM

To: "Evancho, Mary" <mary.evancho@fema.dhs.gov>, "Hildebrand, Rachel" <Rachel.Hildebrand@fema.dhs.gov>

Cc: "Morales, Ana" <Ana.Morales@fema.dhs.gov>, "Buda, Kristin" <[\(b\)\(6\)@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov)>

Subject: FW: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Can we do this from a policy perspective? If we figure out how to get them on-board?

From: Tribble, Ahsha

Sent: Saturday, October 07, 2017 8:21 PM

To: Smith, Heather R <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>; Niedernhofer, Nancy <Nancy.Niedernhofer@fema.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

SA...volunteer

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hickey, Evermary (b)(6)@pge.com>

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 5:04:45 PM

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Office (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)>|

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To: Tribble, Ahsha
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Office (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)> |
(b)(6)@pge.com <mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com> <mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com> <mailto:%C2%A(b)(6)
(b)(6)@pge.com <mailto:A(b)(6)@pge.com>>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6) "
(b)(6)@eei.org <mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org> <mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org> <mailto:
(b)(6)@eei.org>>

Date: October 7, 2017 at 2:47:38 PM PDT

To:
(b)(6)@pge.com <mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com> <mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com> <mailto:(b)(6)
(b)(6)@pge.com>>

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[cid:image001.jpg@01D33F93.844FC8C0]

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Thank you again to all who have offered their support and assistance. We will be working with mutual assistance teams across the industry to address any needs identified by partners on the ground in both Puerto Rico, the USVI, and states impacted by Hurricane Nate.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Secretariat if you have any questions. We will be in full coordination mode with each other and government partners for as long as necessary.

ESCC Secretariat Contact Info

APPA

(b)(6)
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* Nate_Talkers_10072017.pdf<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.mmsend42.com_link.cfm-3Fr-3DmpHv5BdKAaLUC3B1BZ0EUQ-7E-7E-26pe-3DodI9yNpvcfGXhk7xbfNibDQnACFoMEiMf9WC-2DwXSRveH-5FbAcCokhouWfzDMpMJ5K&d=DwMFaQ&c=Oo_p3A70ldcR7Q3zeyon7Q&r=scdm7ioPQYVhqPme17xGBA&m=1L6QdXHgsPpzBGiuEu7cDG5tmRnD5jGY_sAE3fzSj5s&s=BFUe_5HXNUiOQ5Tipc33bagqoyHRITJjSJRMSb5J6xM&e=>

* FAQs_Oct_6.pdf<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.mmsend42.com_link.cfm-3Fr-3DmpHv5BdKAaLUC3B1BZ0EUQ-7E-7E-26pe-3DTWf6IpFLbd7bDdZvEzXR6JkHghnAETKFX8jD90aUkhamg-2DZgR2-5FqeROHH33CRA1S&d=DwMFaQ&c=Oo_p3A70ldcR7Q3zeyon7Q&r=scdm7ioPQYVhqPme17xGBA&m=1L6QdXHgsPpzBGiuEu7cDG5tmRnD5jGY_sAE3fzSj5s&s=IyVLSPj9M4iq09CZ0d3QlJ3q1kfyzuHY8dyT0Nz0iq0&e=>

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Sender:	Evancho, Mary </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=5363E0F8C6584957B15D86E2E06925A7-EVANCHO, MO>
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Recipient:	"Smith, Heather R </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=9177866a1bf84fd8a525e3bdb6837e40-Smith, Heat>"; "Hildebrand, Rachel </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6bee456810014918ab3d35984a984afd-Hildebrand,>"; "Morales, Ana </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=a83a17c064694c33836a565f083aad9d-Morales, An>"; "Buda, Kristin </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f1941a445ad476081a7a301b94228e5-kristin.bud>"
Sent Date:	2017/10/08 09:16:21
Delivered Date:	2017/10/08 09:16:24

From:	Smith, Heather R </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=9177866A1BF84FD8A525E3BDB6837E40-SMITH, HEAT>
To:	"Evancho, Mary </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=5363e0f8c6584957b15d86e2e06925a7-Evancho, Mo>"; "Hildebrand, Rachel </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6bee456810014918ab3d35984a984afd-Hildebrand,>"
CC:	"Morales, Ana </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=a83a17c064694c33836a565f083aad9d-Morales, An>"; "Buda, Kristin </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=f1941a4455ad476081a7a301b94228e5-kristin.bud>"
Subject:	FW: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)
Date:	2017/10/07 20:25:02
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Can we do this from a policy perspective? If we figure out how to get them on-board?

From: Tribble, Ahsha
Sent: Saturday, October 07, 2017 8:21 PM
To: Smith, Heather R <Heather.Smith@fema.dhs.gov>; Niedernhofer, Nancy <Nancy.Niedernhofer@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

SA...volunteer

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hickey, Evermary (b)(6)@pge.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 5:04:45 PM
To: Tribble, Ahsha
Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Good back in California. Remember. PG&E is willing to volunteer 2k hours of effort . Probably not a lot but a small management team might help with logistics or planning. And stay safe and healthy out there.

Evermary Hickey, Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response Support|
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
77 Beale Street<x-apple-data-detectors://2/1>B28R, San Francisco, CA 94105<x-apple-data-detectors://3/0>
Office (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)> (b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:%C2%A (b)(6)@pge.com>

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 7, 2017, at 3:33 PM, Tribble, Ahsha <ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov<mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov>> wrote:

*****CAUTION: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Think before clicking links or opening attachments.*****

Working hard. This is a tough environment. But doing okay. How are you?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hickey, Evermary (b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com>>
Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 3:31:53 PM
To: Tribble, Ahsha
Subject: Re: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

I hope you're doing ok. Take care of yourself.

Evermary Hickey, Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response Support|
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
77 Beale Street<x-apple-data-detectors://2/1>B28R, San Francisco, CA 94105<x-apple-data-detectors://3/0>

Office (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)>
(b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:%C2%A(b)(6)@pge.com>

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 7, 2017, at 3:18 PM, Tribble, Ahsha
<ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov<mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov><mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov>>
>wrote:

*****CAUTION: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Think before clicking links or opening attachments.*****

Hi - the process at this point is to bid on contracts through USACE for emergency work. PREPA didn't do EMAC from my understanding. Next step is permanent work, but we haven't gotten that far. Priority is emergency restoration.

-----Original Message-----

From: Hickey, Evermary [mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com]
Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2017 5:55 PM
To: Tribble, Ahsha
<ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov<mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov><mailto:ahsha.tribble@fema.dhs.gov>>
>
Subject: Fwd: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Hi Ahsha. Hope all is going well. Seems that assistance from IOUs will not be requested.

Ev

Evermary Hickey, Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response Support| Pacific Gas and Electric
Company
77 Beale Street<x-apple-data-detectors://2/1>B28R, San Francisco, CA 94105<x-apple-data-detectors://3/0>

Office (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)>
(b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:%C2%A(b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:A(b)(6)@pge.com>>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)@eei.org<mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org><mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org><mailto:(b)(6)@eei.org>>
Date: October 7, 2017 at 2:47:38 PM PDT
To: (b)(6)@pge.com<mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com><mailto:(b)(6)@pge.com>>
Subject: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

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The ESCC continues to coordinate closely with government partners and across the sector in support of the American Public Power Association (APPA) and its members in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and is monitoring and preparing for any potential impacts from Hurricane Nate.

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Delivered Date:	2017/10/07 20:25:02

From:	DeLaCampa, Alejandro </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=9243bc641c43446bb1ff859bd1eb1882-DeLaCampa,>
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Subject:	RE: ALERT - 1 month story by Miami Herald/Inv. Journalism
Date:	2017/10/19 20:48:39
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Thank you Delyris.

Alex

From: Aquino-Santiago, Delyris

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2017 5:19:49 PM

To: DeLaCampa, Alejandro

Cc: Olivera, Orlando "Landy"

Subject: FW: ALERT - 1 month story by Miami Herald/Inv. Journalism

From: Stoneking, Daniel

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2017 4:40 PM

To: Aquino-Santiago, Delyris <Delyris.Aquino-Santiago@fema.dhs.gov>; Bahamonde, Marty <Marty.Bahamonde@fema.dhs.gov>; Ostomel, Caitlin <Caitlin.Ostomel@fema.dhs.gov>; Travis, Alexandra <alexandra.travis@fema.dhs.gov>; Armeni, Damon <damon.armeni@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov

Subject: FW: ALERT - 1 month story by Miami Herald/Inv. Journalism

Dan Stoneking

Director, Joint Information Center

DR-4339-PR

Media Desk: 866-366-8807

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fema-pr4339prensa@fema.dhs.gov

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<https://www.facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico/>

Send photos and videos to:
FEMA-PR4339-photos@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cole, Janell

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2017 4:21 PM

To: Stoneking, Daniel <Daniel.Stoneking@fema.dhs.gov>; Roth, Ron <Ron.Roth@fema.dhs.gov>; Lopez-de-Victoria, Mayra <Mayra.Lopez-de-Victoria@fema.dhs.gov>

Subject: ALERT - 1 month story by Miami Herald/Inv. Journalism

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/weather/hurricane/article179744081.html>

Have not digested it all, looked for and flagged some key things....

Will be high in evening edition clips.

‘Days were lost’: A month later, Puerto Rico still suffers after slow response to Maria

(Miami Herald/Center for Investigative Journalism)

By Patricia Mazzei And Omayra Sosa Pascual

[Miami Herald/Center for Investigative Journalism](#)

October 19, 2017 2:17 PM

MAUNABO, Puerto Rico

Before Hurricane Maria tore through the rest of this island, it came to Mayor Jorge Márquez's home.

The storm ripped through improvised plastic shutters, shook the windows and sent his panicked family, including his grandchildren, scurrying to a bathroom to hide. For four hours, as the fiercest of Maria's winds roared through his mountain town in southeast Puerto Rico, Márquez kept the wind from forcing itself in by pushing a dining table hard against the front door.

At the end, when the winds finally died down, he stepped outside to glimpse at the damage to the town he's run for nearly two decades. Tattered roofs littered the ground. Snapped trees mangled power lines. The local hospital was lost. The town's funeral home was gone.

Márquez wept.

The easy part of the storm was over. The real agony had yet to begin.

"Everything we've built over 16 years, destroyed in a single day," he said Tuesday, pausing to fight back fresh tears.

A month has passed since Maria ravaged Puerto Rico, and the island continues to operate in emergency mode, struggling to do even the basics: save lives, protect property, provide drinking water, turn on the lights. Time ticks away in a hazy state of permanent disaster, a catastrophe born from the worst storm to cross Puerto Rico in 85 years — and of a slow recovery by the federal, state and local governments.

The blame for the unsatisfactory response, the Miami Herald and Puerto Rico's Center for Investigative Journalism found, lies with bureaucracies that were unprepared for a collapsed communications system and overwhelmed by the logistical challenges of aiding an island left with no corner unharmed. Even the White House appeared indifferent to the needs of 3.4 million American citizens 1,000 miles from its shores.

Above all, strapped finances that plunged the island into an economic tailspin long before any winds arrived left the state government so thinly stretched it could not maintain its power grid or afford extensive preparations for a monster storm — much less pay for the sort of recovery that would be demanded in the mainland U.S.

Forty-eight people died, though that's likely a significant undercount.

Much remains to be learned about the recovery flaws Maria exposed. But disaster managers already know the historic storm -- which has required more FEMA food and water distribution than

any other disaster -- will force them to rethink how they approach a worst-case scenario that ordinary plans were ill-equipped to deal with in the systemic breakdown that followed landfall.

“If this response had been perfect, you still would have very significant suffering and destruction, no matter what, because of the storm,” said U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, a Florida Republican who pushed early on for more military involvement. “But I do think some days were lost.”

STRING OF CALAMITIES

The urgent call to Gov. Ricardo Rosselló, whose cell phone signal had vanished, came a few hours after the strongest Maria winds had passed on Sept. 20. Carlos Mercader, executive director of Puerto Rico’s federal office in Washington, got through to a working landline at the governor’s mansion in Old San Juan.

Mercader had news for the governor, obtained from a friend’s WhatsApp message: Waters were rising fast in Levittown, a suburb west of San Juan, and people were scrambling to their roofs. The governor’s press secretary checked social media and saw a local news reporter had just posted a similar message about the flooding, about a dozen of miles away.

Out rushed the governor with rescue crews, including power line workers with bucket trucks.

“We were there until early morning,” Rosselló told the Herald and the **Center for Investigative Journalism (CPI, for its initials in Spanish)** in an interview, recalling the first in a string of calamities that started to pile up: a rupture at the Guajataca Dam. A power blackout across 70 percent of the island’s 69 hospitals. A fuel shortage. A shutdown of airports and seaports for three days.

“This is a fluid situation that, if left unattended, could get worse,” the 38-year-old governor, who took office in January, said after nearly four weeks of living in extended crisis.

Rosselló’s public safety chief, Héctor Pesquera, had been unable to drive out of his house after the storm because his street was littered with trees. Pesquera, a former head of Miami’s FBI office, said he grabbed his briefcase and set out on foot with a flashlight in his mouth, dodging hanging branches.

The emergency operations center in Caguas, south of San Juan, had flooded and become unusable, Pesquera said. He reached a cop by phone who could give him a lift to San Juan’s convention

center, which instantly became the government's command headquarters. The drive to the convention center, usually 10 minutes long, took an hour.

Ricardo Ramos, chief executive of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, PREPA, watched from the public utility's headquarters in Miramar as Maria's onslaught knocked out the island's entire power grid. Then, the storm took out the utility's computer servers, leaving the man in charge of keeping on the lights entirely in the dark.

"I didn't have Word or email or Excel or anything," he said. "Our emergency generator failed. Our technician offices lost their computers and flooded. The offices are now full of mice."

A PREPA plant in the western city of Arecibo, near where Maria's eye left the island, experienced so much flooding that employees had to climb to the chimney for safety, he said. After the storm, Ramos sent a helicopter to fly over other destroyed facilities, looking for workers to come out and wave to signal they were OK.

The local **Federal Emergency Management Administration chief, Alejandro De La Campa**, had bedded down — along with some 300 FEMA workers still responding to Hurricane Irma — at a Caguas warehouse. It was restocked with the standard number of provisions FEMA stored ahead of any storm, no matter its size: about 700,000 liters of water and half a million meals.

They proved to be woefully insufficient: The supplies ran out in two days.

Puerto Rico had never needed a larger emergency stash. Not much more fit in the warehouse, De La Campa told the Herald/CPI, acknowledging that a bigger building — perhaps twice as large — might now be necessary.

The only reason Hurricane Irma two weeks earlier hadn't depleted the stores, he added, was because that storm skirted Puerto Rico and mostly hurt the island's northern coast — meaning southern municipalities could aid their neighbors without tapping all the federal provisions.

Maria offered no such respite, affecting all of the island's 78 municipalities and leaving the government without an intact oasis from where to stage its response.

'CALL ME PARANOID'

Puerto Rico opened 500 emergency shelters ahead of Maria, a record number that didn't draw many evacuees until the rains actually started and people seemed to accept the storm might really be as bad as forecast. Afterward, evacuees kept seeking shelter; at their peak, the number reached 15,000.

"They might call me paranoid," Rosselló said. "I anticipated this could happen, and seven days before the storm, we started working on it."

But he was still hamstrung by Puerto Rico's measly coffers: Expenses incurred before the White House approved a Sept. 20 major disaster declaration had to be paid in full by the state, which is \$72 billion in debt and under the control of a federally appointed fiscal board.

So asking other states for help before Maria, which might have lined up resources for Puerto Rico more quickly, would have been an expensive undertaking without knowing for sure what havoc the storm would wreak.

In contrast, six days before Irma hit Florida, the state filed its first request through the Emergency Mutual Aid Compact available to states and territories. Florida ultimately made 99 requests before landfall.

The number of requests Puerto Rico made before Maria: Zero.

PREPA, the bankrupt power utility, which is \$9 billion in debt and locked in a court battle with its bondholders, could also have requested aid after Maria hit through the American Public Power Association, a mutual aid trade network for some 1,100 electrical utilities, as Texas and Florida did after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. That's partly how, 10 days after Irma, Florida utilities restored power to 98 percent of the 6.7 million customers who had gone dark.

But PREPA didn't tap the aid network.

Instead, Ramos chose to hire one of two companies that had answered PREPA's request for proposals for far less restoration work after Irma, but had not yet been hired: Whitefish Energy Holdings, a small, little-known Montana firm formed only two years ago.

The other bidder, which Ramos declined to name, had demanded a \$25 million payment guarantee up front, Ramos said. PREPA's emergency fund had only \$100 million, which Ramos feared would be quickly exhausted if he hired another public utility to assist with repairs.

PREPA "doesn't have the cash to cover all the expenses," Ramos said. "I'd have to pay it to later seek reimbursement. It's a cash-flow problem."

The New York Power Authority did send crews the day after the storm after Puerto Rico asked New York directly for help. Whitefish later contracted with Jacksonville's JEA public utility and the Kissimmee Utility Authority to provide additional line workers.

PREPA also hired 60 local contractors, Ramos said, but still didn't have enough line workers or utility trucks — and couldn't immediately welcome more, either: The government had no gas for trucks and no food or housing for crews.

That Puerto Rico's power grid was in precarious shape was well known. Seventy percent of PREPA customers lost power during Irma, though nearly 97 percent had been restored by the time Maria arrived two weeks later. But the newest equipment in the system is from the 1970s, Ramos said, with much of it dating back to the 1950s and '60s, though its useful life is supposed to be 30 years. Over the last three years, the utility has lost more than two-thirds of its workers -- about 2,500 people, Ramos said -- as public austerity measures forced PREPA to slash benefits.

How fragile the grid remains was evidenced by the fluctuating number of Puerto Ricans who have electricity. Last Sunday, a San Juan substation temporarily failed, knocking out electricity in the capital's main hospital.

A month after Maria, 81 percent of PREPA customers are still without power.

COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT

The early response centered on saving lives. **FEMA** provided 16 urban search-and-rescue teams. Pesquera dispatched police, firefighters and paramedics as anecdotes came in via word of mouth of flash flooding, mudslides and injuries. In Cataño. Toa Baja. Canóvanas. Ramos, the PREPA chief, ordered his crews to help people before power lines.

No one in government had a full picture of how dire things were. Before requesting federal aid, states traditionally rely on local governments to report damages. But in Puerto Rico most mayors had only walkie-talkies — and the occasional ham radio — to communicate.

And for the first 24 hours, as Maria's rains continued, no one could fly over the island to see the extent of the wreckage.

The morning after landfall, when the National Guard finally made it to a San Juan hangar to fetch a helicopter, they found it swept away by the storm, said Brig. Gen. Isabelo Rivera, the

Guard's adjutant general and commander. His pilots drove for four hours across blocked roads to reach another helicopter in the western city of Aguadilla. They flew it to San Juan to pick up the governor.

"I was surprised that they weren't able to marshal the resources needed quicker to address the problem. I thought it was an inadequate response," said P.K. "Ken" Keen, the retired three-star general who commanded the U.S. military response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

The communications blackout, he added, partly explained why. In Haiti, "the cell towers did not get destroyed in the earthquake, which was fortunate. We didn't lose our power to the extent that happened in Puerto Rico, and the cell towers came back up that night. So we were able to start using our cell phones, which was really our primary means of communications."

In Puerto Rico, the government designated runners to drive to places outside San Juan and send information back and forth in person.

Some isolation was expected: For several days before Maria, Rosselló – following FEMA advice familiar to all Americans who live in hurricane zones – warned his citizens to prepare for 72 hours of self-sufficiency.

"There won't be light when this happens," he said, predicting a "general communications collapse." "It's possible that we will spend a significant amount of time, at least three or four days, in a blackout."

Try five. Six. Seven. Try 29.

"Our patience is running out," Alex de Jesús Maldonado, a 52-year-old from Bayonne, N.J., said two weeks after the storm in the hard-hit mountain town of Utuado, where he was helping his family find water. "This isn't a Third World country in South America."

De La Campa said FEMA might have to revise its guidelines to recommend that people in a massive storm's path prepare to be without government assistance for at least a week.

"We'll have to rethink many of the actions we take," he said.

De La Campa, who ultimately spent three days living in the warehouse and didn't make it to his own home and family for five days, said he realized just how bad Maria was only after the storm: He stepped outside once its worst winds subsided and saw concrete power poles — the sturdiest ones of them all — lying flat.

"That's when you realize how catastrophic the event was," he said.

GOLF WEEKEND

After an emergency, the chain of command puts the governor of Puerto Rico in charge of a triumvirate of sorts, with a federal coordinating officer — De La Campa, appointed by FEMA in Washington — and a state coordinating officer, Abner Gómez, executive director of Puerto Rico’s emergency management agency, appointed by Rosselló.

By Sept. 30, Gómez would be officially replaced by Pesquera, the public safety chief who acted like Rosselló’s de facto deputy from Day One. By Oct. 11, De La Campa would be replaced by Mike Byrne, brought in after successfully coordinating FEMA’s recovery efforts for Hurricane Harvey.

In a news release, FEMA characterized the switch to Byrne as an “expansion” of the federal leadership team, a planned move that freed De La Campa to return to his regular duties as the agency’s Caribbean area director. Frustrated Puerto Ricans, and some FEMA critics within Rosselló’s administration, saw it as a tacit admission that the agency’s initial response had been lacking.

President Donald Trump, acting on a phone request from Rosselló and De La Campa, had promptly signed a major-disaster declaration so FEMA could open its checkbook. But the default cost-sharing formula requires the feds to pick up 75 percent of the tab, leaving Puerto Rico to cover the remaining 25 percent.

In Florida, that 25 percent is evenly split between the state and local governments. In Puerto Rico, neither the state nor its municipalities could bear even that much.

Whether Washington realized just how much ruin Maria had caused in Puerto Rico was unclear immediately following the storm. Federal sources insisted the White House was closely engaged in the response. But Trump spent the weekend golfing in New Jersey and tweeting about National Football League players kneeling in protest during the national anthem, diverting most of the public’s attention away from the isolated island.

PEDRO PORTAL pportal@miamiherald.com

It was FEMA Administrator Brock Long and White House homeland security adviser Tom Bossert who appeared to finally sound the alarm in Washington on Sept. 25 — five days after Maria’s landfall — following a Puerto Rico visit in which they flew over the stricken island. They got an earful from state leaders, in private, about the slow federal response. In public, Rosselló warned of a “humanitarian crisis” that could lead to a “mass exodus.”

“We’ve got a lot of work to do,” Long admitted in a news conference back in Washington. “We realize that Maria was 1 mile per hour from being a Category 5 storm, but

it's the worst Puerto Rico has seen. It's been very complex for us to respond, from a logistical nature of the island."

The next day, the White House took the extraordinary step of amending its disaster declaration to cover 100 percent of Puerto Rico's disaster recovery costs for six months.

A CRIPPLED NATIONAL GUARD

The most immediate military response came from the Puerto Rican National Guard, which activated its 8,000 available members. But only 4,500 could report to duty.

More than a thousand work as civilian first responders and weren't called up. About a 1,000 more had already moved to the mainland, fleeing the island's high unemployment rate. Others lost property in the storm or couldn't reach their bases, and stayed home until they secured supplies for their families and the roads were cleared, said Rivera, the National Guard commander.

"Maria treated us all the same," he said.

It took three days to get in touch with all his soldiers, he added. At least 1,300 soldiers from other states' National Guard eventually arrived to help.

Rivera, whose former office was damaged by Maria, moved into a tiny room with no air conditioning at a National Guard hangar in San Juan. He could work out of the frigid convention center command across the street, but instead chooses to go there only once a day, for a dawn meeting with Rosselló and other key disaster managers.

That's kept Rivera unusually out of the spotlight, despite his high rank. He attributes his low profile in part to his position as an early, private FEMA critic. The agency claimed it had supplies that weren't getting out, while Rivera insisted he had soldiers ready to go but no provisions to haul.

To bolster military aid, the Navy said Sept. 26 it would deploy the USNS Comfort, a floating hospital, from Norfolk to San Juan — a five-day journey that couldn't begin immediately because the ship wasn't ready to sail.

The feds had discussed sending the Comfort sooner, about three days after the storm, federal sources said, but backed off. One source attributed the delay to a communications mix-up with Rosselló's administration. Another source said Puerto Rico worried it might have to pay for the expensive ship. But generators powering the island's hospitals kept crashing, and eventually no one could justify keeping the Comfort away.

Yet sending the ship only helped with one problem. Sen. Rubio arrived with the Coast Guard on the same day as Long and Bossert and concluded the island had a bigger challenge: distributing the aid piling up at partially reopened airports and seaports.

Maria ruined trucks and turned truck drivers into storm victims. Even if both had been available, the fuel shortage -- successfully resolved by the state -- and number of impassable roads made transportation difficult. Rubio urged turning over supply distribution to the military, a request he said in retrospect should have been made earlier. Some members of Rosselló's administration bristled.

"No governmental organization likes to admit that their needs outstrip their capacity," Rubio told the Herald/CPI. "Even the government itself became a victim of the storm, in many ways.... The logistical capacity of the government was compromised."

THE ARMY STEPS UP

On Sept. 27 — a week after landfall — the Pentagon tasked Army Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan with overseeing military relief operations on land.

"This is the worst I've ever seen," Buchanan said three days after arriving.

He'd flown in from California, where he oversaw the response to rampant wildfires. Despite helping run the land response in Texas after Hurricane Harvey and in Florida after Irma, Buchanan told the Herald/CPI he did not expect the critical situation facing Puerto Rico, especially its hospitals.

Despite the worrying reports from his people on the ground, Trump and Acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke downplayed the magnitude of the disaster. Duke carelessly said at a White House news conference that the Maria response was a "good news story." That ignited the fury of San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz, a potential Rosselló reelection challenger.

"When you're drinking from a creek, it's not a good news story," a stunned Cruz told CNN. "When you don't have food for a baby, it's not a good news story."

Trump launched into an extended media feud with Cruz, whom he called "nasty." He also implied Puerto Ricans — who had been trimming trees, fashioning makeshift water pipes and tying up dangling power cables themselves — were lazy.

"Such poor leadership ability by the Mayor of San Juan, and others in Puerto Rico, who are not able to get their workers to help," Trump tweeted. "They want everything to be done for them

when it should be a community effort. 10,000 Federal workers now on Island doing a fantastic job.”

Trump eventually visited Puerto Rico on Oct. 3, spending four hours in San Juan in which he said Maria hadn’t been a “real catastrophe” like Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. He cheerfully tossed paper towels to refugees in a Guaynabo shelter. Ten days later, he tweeted that the feds can’t keep helping Puerto Rico “forever.”

Buchanan conceded some criticism of the federal government’s Maria response was valid.

“If you are here waiting for help, you are not patient,” he said. “And you shouldn’t be patient.”

PROLONGED DARKNESS

Initially, Gov. Rosselló and PREPA chief Ramos initially estimated restoring power — a crucial step toward returning to normalcy — and hardening the grid would take half a year.

About a week after the storm, the White House had charged the Army Corps of Engineers with rebuilding the system. “That help is very welcome because of our liquidity issue,” Ramos said.

But PREPA’s contractor, Whitefish, is still working, parallel to the Corps. And Ramos has hired a second contractor, Power Secure, to speed things up, he said: “The Corps of Engineers process moves slowly.”

Under daily fire in local media from Puerto Ricans increasingly impatient about the prolonged darkness, Rosselló and Ramos unveiled a more aggressive restoration timeline on Oct. 14, pledging 95 percent of customers will have power by Dec. 15 — nearly three months after Maria’s landfall.

The announcement came after FEMA fronted PREPA \$128 million for emergency work. The agency had already given the utility \$213 million to cover Maria costs.

On Monday, FEMA and the Army Corps inked a \$240 million contract with Fluor, a major Texas-based firm, to lead the Puerto Rico project. The Corps had previously hired a Pennsylvania company, Weston Solutions, for \$35 million to focus on bringing back San Juan’s Palo Seco power plant.

For a taxpayer-funded federal agencies, disbursing such significant funds takes time, local FEMA head De La Campa said.

“We’re talking about a lot of money,” he said. “Our agency has to have fiscally responsible.”

THE MAYORS

In addition to the feds, state and military, some of the response fell on 78 local mayors, a colorful and politically powerful group whose members — depending on the day —praised, prodded or pleaded with their various government counterparts.

Neither the state nor military had enough manpower to organize distribution points for residents to directly obtain supplies, as the National Guard did in the Florida Keys after Irma.

So FEMA delivered food -- in many cases, meager rations of chips, candy and other unhealthful options -- and water into regional staging areas and tasked the mayors with picking up and distributing them.

But not every mayor had adequate trucks — or, apparently, good intentions. The FBI is investigating five mayors suspected of hoarding provisions or offering them to political cronies.

Still, Mayor Márquez of Maunabo, the mountain town of about 12,000 people, defended the mayors as the storm's most effective responders.

"If anything collapsed in this, it was the government," said Márquez, a member of the opposition Popular Democratic Party. "We wouldn't have survived this if it hadn't been for the municipalities."

He credited his employees and residents with clearing the roads. He hired truck and tractor owners as emergency contractors, even though the town, also hit by state budget cuts, can't pay them for now.

"Everything is on loan until FEMA can pay," he said.

Seven hundred of his residents requested blue roof tarps from FEMA, but only 58 came in last week, the mayor said. He set up a makeshift hospital inside the police station, a conference room turned into an emergency room and outfitted with a couple of hospital beds, several fans and a cot. A funeral director and embalmer who lost his storefront moved in temporarily into an empty building across the street.

"WE'RE OPEN," read a sign out front.

Soldiers bring the town's food and water share every morning from the regional staging area in Ceiba. Workers start their distribution at 8 a.m. in a local baseball stadium. Everything usually runs out by noon. Food is scarce and goes first — on Tuesday, they were out by 10 a.m.

“People ask for bread. And for baby formula. And for adult Pampers,” said Luis Lafuente, a mayoral aide.

At this moment, on Day 27, he couldn’t give them any of it.

Sosa Pascual reports for Puerto Rico’s Center for Investigative Journalism (CPI), which worked jointly with the Miami Herald on this report. McClatchy correspondent Tim Johnson contributed from Utuado, Puerto Rico.

Janell Cole

FEMA DR-4336/4339-PR

Federal Emergency Management Agency

External Affairs – Joint Information Center

FEMA cell: 202-436-2821

Sender:	DeLaCampa, Alejandro </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=9243bc641c43446bb1ff859bd1eb1882-DeLaCampa,>
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From:	Tennyson, Stephanie </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DBE5FAB3426845E4833FF135EF56E6B1-TENNYSON, S>
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Subject:	FW: Media Analysis Report DR-4339-PR 10/19/17 (morning)
Date:	2017/10/19 12:02:22
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Found this article rather interesting...

She was 92, stranded in Puerto Rico nursing home. Her rescue: an Uber sent from Miami (Miami Herald)

By Douglas Hanks

October 19, 2017 7:00 AM

[Miami Herald](#)

The good news out of San Juan came in a hurry for Natascha Otero-Santiago but it wouldn't last long: Her mother's 92-year-old friend, stranded on the fifth floor of a nursing home with no power, finally had a seat waiting for her on a private jet. It was leaving in 90 minutes

Otero-Santiago, stuck in her office in Fort Lauderdale, had to find the elderly woman a ride and fast. So she pulled out her cellphone. And hailed an Uber.

"I was really surprised it was working," the public relations executive said, recalling the Oct. 4 rescue. "I got a driver right away."

Nearly a month after Hurricane Maria [wiped out most of Puerto Rico's electricity](#) and [cellular service](#), Uber has emerged as an app-based barometer for the most modern of recoveries. The ride-hailing service is **operating at only about 20 percent of its capacity before the storm**, largely confined to the San Juan area and its enclave of cell towers that at least offer spotty service.

"I've been busy," said Giovanni Gonzalez, an Uber driver in San Juan who went back to work about two weeks ago. With long gas lines, Gonzalez said many residents opted to hire a driver instead of using their own car. And Maria left driving a mess: Missing traffic signals worsen gridlock as police step in to direct traffic, he said, and rains can all but shut down a road.

"It rains for 10 minutes, and it's already flooded because everything is saturated," he said.

Another problem for Gonzalez is spotty cellular service. While phones are working enough for customers to hail him, Gonzalez said he can't count on a connection lasting long enough to record his full fare.

"When you have no cell service, it takes Uber a long time to end the trip," he said during a telephone interview. "There are some rides when I had to tell them: I did this ride, but it didn't record the trip."

Uber spokeswoman Julie Robinson said the company secured about 10,000 gallons of fuel for drivers to combat shortages, but that a lack of cellular service has idled almost the entire fleet. Robinson said only about 15 percent of the company's drivers were connected to the system last weekend.

Electricity is out for about 80 percent of the island. [An Oct. 18 report from the Federal Communications Commission](#) said 71 percent of the island's cellular towers are out of service.

San Juan's numbers look much better on the FCC report, with just 45 percent of its towers out of service — the lowest outage number for any area in the U.S. territory. Gonzalez said he's taken riders to Walmart for groceries, restaurants and shops. His most recent fare: a trip to a San Juan mall.

Still, Gonzalez said business hasn't been brisk enough for him to make it. He expects his trip to the mall to be his last as an Uber driver in Puerto Rico. The 29-year-old conducted a phone interview from the city's airport, where he was waiting for a flight to take him to a friend's home in Seattle.

"It's very difficult here," he said.

Nearly a month after Hurricane Maria wiped out most of Puerto Rico's electricity and cellular service, Uber has emerged as an app-based barometer for the most modern of recoveries.

Uber's skeleton fleet in San Juan was key to getting Margarita Berga de Lema to Miami two weeks after Maria hit. The 92-year-old retired airline executive was stranded without power in a nursing home, relying on daily food deliveries from staff.

Her best friend, Chia Otero, 89, was already in the Miami area when Maria hit, part of a long-planned visit with her daughter, Otero-Santiago. After the storm, the two were desperate to get Berga de Lema out of San Juan, especially after Maria left her without running water in the early days of recovery.

Otero-Santiago, director of digital strategy at Latin 2 Latin in Fort Lauderdale, grew up in Puerto Rico and had been part of the South Florida relief effort shuttling supplies to the island and helping residents flee to the mainland. Her volunteer work connected Otero-Santiago with the operator of an air ambulance leaving San Juan on October 4, with a last-minute opening for a seat.

"We called Margarita, because we knew we had to get her out of there as soon as possible," said Otero, who was in her daughter's office when news arrived about the open seat.

Berga de Lema got the call at 4 p.m. for a flight leaving 90 minutes later. She thought she could get to the airport herself. "She said, 'I'm calling my nephew,'" Otero recalled. "My daughter said, 'No, you're not calling anybody. We're sending you an Uber. He's on his way.'"

After tossing some clothes in a bag, Berga de Lema walked down five flight of steps to meet her driver, a man that Otero-Santiago's phone only identifies as Moises.

"He told me, 'Don't worry, lady,'" Berga de Lema said in an interview Wednesday from Miami. Traffic was bad, and Otero-Santiago's Uber app showed the car seeming to stop on its way to San Juan as the mother-and-daughter team followed the progress from Fort Lauderdale.

At one point, the pair in Florida had the pair in Puerto Rico on parallel phone conversations: the mother talking to Berga de Lema and the daughter to Moises. The driver drove his passenger to the private jet terminal, checking various runways until he found the waiting plane with the right tail numbers, completing the \$40 trip.

"Moises," Otero-Santiago said, "got five stars."

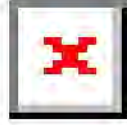
From: Simoneau, Grace

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2017 11:56 AM

Subject: Media Analysis Report DR-4339-PR 10/19/17 (morning)

Please see attached for today's morning Media Analysis Report for DR-4339-PR.

Maria- please distribute to all-hands.



Media Analysis Report

Puerto Rico - Hurricanes Irma/Maria DR-4336/4339-PR

Thursday, October 19, 2017, Morning Edition

Hot Issues:

- *Private hospitals fear FEMA will stop supplying diesel for generators*

News Clips Analysis / Trends:

- Heavy emphasis continues on this week being a month since Maria struck: "Much of the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico still looks the way it did immediately after the hurricane." Mayors complain to **FEMA**. Grim statistics dominate; "good news" quotes from survivors virtually non-existent.
- Lots of attention being paid to governor's trip to the White House today; see evening media analysis for follow-up stories
- Seven-minute interview with FCO Michael Byrne on NPR this morning; link to audio in report below

Survivor News and Quotes:

- Mr. Medina said that if his wife's health were to begin to deteriorate, he knew that his neighbors would not hesitate to help him carry her across the river. Ms. Rivera chimed in. "We Puerto Ricans are fighters and hard workers," she said. "My life depends on it." – *New York Times*

News Clips Highlights/Summary:

- NPR audio clip of interview with FCO
- Spanish - Primera Hora reports mayors complain to **FEMA** about lack of aid to survivors
- Spanish – Mayor of Guaynabo begs for tarps
- Governor meets with Trump at White House today, multiple stories
- In Washington Wednesday, demonstrators marched from Capitol Hill to **FEMA** headquarters to demand a bigger response from the government on hurricane relief for Puerto Rico -- as well as other U.S. locations hit by Hurricanes Irma and Harvey.
- Hurricane could worsen Puerto Rico economic and population decline that it had in the decade before Maria: The number of residents had plunged by 11 percent, the economy had shrunk by 15 percent, and the government had become unable to pay its bills.
- Several stories about ideas, technology and materials for restoring the power grid
- Government Executive is the latest publication to make note of congressional committee set to investigate potential abuse of federal funds and resources in municipalities, citing red flags raised by the FBI
- About 1,200 federal prisoners from Puerto Rico will be housed at the federal correctional facility in Yazoo City, Miss.
- Spanish - As of next week the **FEMA** may stop supplying diesel to the country's private hospitals, Primera Hora and El Nuevo Dia report
- Medical team has deployed from Langley Air Force Base

- Uber is having some success despite cell communication problems
- At Wapa Radio — AM 680 — advertising is up more than 300 percent since the storm. Companies are using the radio both to advertise and to communicate with employees who no longer have phones or are scattered over the island.
- Daily Kos wonders whether millions of Puerto-Ricans may-move to the mainland
- Edgar Garcia, now in Virginia, is one many Islanders now in the states with his family, hoping to protect them from the Hurricane Maria’s aftermath in Puerto Rico
- To contact family in Virginia, survivor who is now on mainland tells how he and some people from his neighborhood pooled gasoline and drove to San Juan, the island’s capital, “just to make a call ..., just to say, ‘Hey, we’re alive.’”
- CNN features veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, who self-deployed to Mayaguez. When they see a need, they just go. Red tape frustrates them, especially when people are hurting and they can help. They took over abandoned airport in Mayaguez as their base.
- Wisconsin columnist: Mainland U.S. shortages of vital medical supplies manufactured in Puerto Rico could amount to karmic twists to the federal government’s lackadaisical initial response to the deadly destruction visited upon the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico

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FEMA

Audio: Weeks After Maria, FEMA Still Distributing Basic Needs To Puerto Rico (NPR)

October 19, 2017 5:04 AM ET
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)
[National Public Radio](#)
Link includes 7:02 Audio

Steve Inskip talks to **FEMA coordinator Michael Byrne** about the recovery effort in Puerto Rico as its governor is set to meet with President Trump. Byrne says more stores and gas stations are opening.

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Alcaldes Se Reúnen Con Directivo De FEMA (Primera Hora)

By Rebecca Banuchi

October 19, 2017

[Primera Hora \(PRI\)](#).

Almost a month after the emergency caused by Hurricane Maria, mayors ' complain about the assistance survivors have received from the federal government to FEMA directors, and would make them think that only a few days have passed since the powerful atmospheric phenomenon.

A casi un mes de la emergencia provocada por el huracán María, las quejas de los alcaldes sobre la asistencia que han recibido del gobierno federal harían pensar que solo han pasado unos días desde pasó del potente fenómeno atmosférico.

La insuficiencia de suministros, la escasez de toldos y la logística en el recogido de escombros coparon este miércoles la agenda del encuentro que sostuvieron ocho alcaldes con el director de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (**FEMA**, en inglés), Alejandro De La Campa.

“Te piden tanta información de las diferentes áreas que la coordinación, debe ser la correcta, y no es así”, dijo a este medio la alcaldesa de Ponce, María “Mayita” Meléndez, al concluir la reunión con el funcionario federal.

“Quiero que se coordine con los alcaldes, aquellas personas que están distribuyendo para no repetir las mismas áreas, y que aquellas áreas que no se hayan podido cubrir, se puedan cubrir finalmente... Había un desfase entre **FEMA** y **FEMA**. Entre ellos. Porque la información que le estaban dando a la región era incorrecta”, agregó la ejecutiva municipal.

A pesar de sus críticas, Meléndez manifestó estar satisfecha con los resultados preliminares de la reunión con De La Campa, y dijo que se atendieron sus preocupaciones respecto a los toldos y la distribución de alimentos y agua. Según la alcaldesa, Ponce recibía suministros en igual cantidad que los pueblos con 25,000 y 30,000 habitantes, a pesar que sus pobladores suman cerca de 160,000.

El encuentro se efectuó en el hotel Sheraton, ubicado a pasos del Centro de Convenciones, donde se ubica el Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia (COE), que está ocupado principalmente por empleados de **FEMA**. Además de Meléndez, participaron los alcaldes de Arecibo, Ciales, Adjuntas, Culebra, Maunabo, Dorado, Patillas y Arroyo. Para este viernes, fueron convocados ocho ejecutivos municipales adicionales.

El alcalde adjunteño, Jaime Barlucea, dijo que una de sus inquietudes principales es la falta de toldos suficientes para cubrir las necesidades de sus compueblanos sin techo. **FEMA** ha informado que, a raíz de los fenómenos atmosféricos que afectaron también a Estados Unidos, escasea el producto, aunque se espera un envío pronto a la isla.

Sin embargo, el principal malestar de Barlucea es con el titular de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE), Ricardo Ramos, quien estaba en el COE justo cuando se llevaba a cabo la reunión con De La Campa.

“En Adjuntas no ha habido presencia de la AEE”, dijo con cierta tirantez Barlucea, quien comentó que ya personal de su administración ha identificado las averías del sistema en el pueblo, pero no han recibido atención de la corporación pública.

“La AEE no ha hecho nada, le hemos dado la información, los detalles, el análisis, se lo estamos suministrando todo. Hace semana y media, hablé con el director ejecutivo por teléfono, y al día de hoy, no he recibido respuesta alguna”, añadió.

De La Campa no estuvo disponible ayer para entrevista, pero Delyris Aquino, portavoz de FEMA en la isla, destacó que las reuniones, programadas para lunes, miércoles y viernes, les dan la oportunidad a los alcaldes de conocer cómo operan las ayudas del gobierno federal, tanto para los individuos como para los gobiernos locales, y aclarar dudas sobre cómo funciona el financiamiento y el alcance de esa asistencia.

“Es importante escuchar al alcalde, que es quien trae a FEMA las necesidades de sus municipios. Nadie mejor que los alcaldes, que conocen los barrios y zonas afectadas, y el tipo de necesidad en esas zonas afectadas. Es una oportunidad para que nos mantengamos en esta comunicación, que estamos tratando de mantener abierta y directa, que los alcaldes se sientan en la libertad de comunicarnos lo que necesitan”, expresó Aquino.

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El Alcalde Ángel Pérez Espera Que Lleguen Más Toldos A Guaynabo (El Nuevo Día)

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 18, 2017

The priority of the mayor of Guaynabo, Ángel Pérez, is to get more blue tarps to his people so that the hundreds of affected families can return to their homes.

Guaynabo – La prioridad del alcalde de Guaynabo, Ángel Pérez, es que lleguen más toldos a su pueblo para que las cientos de familias damnificadas pueden regresar a sus hogares.

En este municipio, que, además del huracán María también se vio afectado por las lluvias que cayeron recientemente, aún quedan 70 personas refugiadas.

“El llamado primero es en cuanto a los toldos, porque una vez uno pueda ayudar con esto a las familias ellos pueden regresar a sus hogares, o aquellas pertenencias que pudieron salvar pues entonces no terminarán de perderlas”, sostuvo Pérez a este medio.

“Nosotros tenemos una solicitud de cerca de 3,000 toldos (a FEMA)”, dijo al mencionar que en ese municipio de 100,000 habitantes unas 2,700 familias perdieron parte o totalmente el techo de sus viviendas.

También hizo un llamado al gobierno federal a que agilice el proceso de investigar las pérdidas que tienen los ciudadanos.

“Hay que ver cómo este proceso de investigación que ellos tienen lo podemos agilizar para que las familias ya reciban su ayuda y puedan comenzar a rehabilitar sus casas o hacerle las mejoras necesarias”, indicó.

Además, reiteró un llamado que le hizo al administrador de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA), Brock Long, y al presidente de los Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, a “que no mire una sustitución de un techo nuevamente de madera y zinc; que busquemos alternativas que sean permanentes”.

Dijo que él ve como una inversión el que se gaste un poquito más y se haga la estructura en cemento, “porque te vas a evitar en el futuro que estas familias estén pasando por lo mismo”.

“No seguir poniendo parches sino buscar soluciones permanentes”, sentenció.

Otra situación que está tratando de solucionar el ejecutivo municipal es el recogido de escombros.

Esta es una de las quejas principales de los ciudadanos.

Pérez, quien dijo que ya tiene al día el recogido de la basura doméstica, aceptó que sí hay un problema en este renglón.

“Ahora mismo estamos con las brigadas del municipio, que son cerca de once y con brigadas de tres contratistas privados recogiendo lo que es el material vegetativo, los escombros”, mencionó.

El director de Obras Públicas municipal, Wilfredo Martínez, estimó en un 75% la cantidad de escombros que aún están en las vías.

Anticipó que en unos dos meses la ciudad podría ya estar casi sin esa basura.

Mientras tanto, el alcalde inició una campaña de fumigación para evitar la propagación de mosquitos.

En Guaynabo, un 5% de los ciudadanos tendría luz.

“En cuanto a la luz eso varía mucho porque se nos está cayendo, prácticamente va y viene, pero aquí no hemos pasado de un 5%”, informó.

Respecto al suministro del agua, dijo que aunque “gran

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WHITE HOUSE / CONGRESS / POLITICS

Audio: Puerto Rico's Governor Is In Washington To Meet With Trump (NPR)

October 19, 2017 7:45 AM ET

Heard on [Morning Edition](#) – 3:35 audio at link below

[Adrian Florido](#)

[NPR](#)

- **Puerto Rico also mentioned on [NPR News Brief](#)**

Parts of Puerto Rico look as if the hurricane struck yesterday, not last month. Gov. Ricardo Rossello is in Washington to speak with members of Congress. He'll also meet with President Trump.

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Trump To Meet With Puerto Rican Governor In The Oval Office (NY Post)

By Joe Tacopino

[New York Post](#), October 18, 2017

President Trump will meet with the governor of Puerto Rico at The White House on Thursday as the US territory struggles to recover in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

Trump will welcome Governor Ricardo Rosselló for a meeting in the Oval Office, according to a schedule released by administration.

“We will be welcoming Gov. Rosselló of Puerto Rico to the White House to talk about the ongoing recovery and rebuilding efforts,” press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said at the daily briefing.

Trump has been critical of the island’s efforts to recover after the disaster.

In a tweet last week Trump said: “We cannot keep **FEMA**, the Military & the First Responders, who have been amazing (under the most difficult circumstances) in P.R. forever!”

Gov. Rosselló responded at the time: “The US citizens in Puerto Rico are requesting the support that any of our fellow citizens would receive across our Nation.”

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Dem Senators write DHS calling for accurate hurricane death counts (The Hill)

By Olivia Beavers - 10/19/17 06:00 AM EDT [32](#)

[The Hill](#)

Top Democratic senators are calling on the Department of Homeland Security to accurately provide death counts in Puerto Rico following Hurricanes Maria and Irma.

“We urge you to provide all necessary resources to confirm that storm-related deaths are being counted correctly,” the senators wrote in the letter to DHS Acting Secretary Elaine Duke.

The senators argued for an accurate death toll, saying the current count at 48 does not take into account what media reports say are about 450 more people who have died since the hurricane as well as 69 people who have been reported missing.

"The need for an accurate death toll is especially important because President Trump seems to be using the number of fatalities to determine the quality of the disaster response," their letter continued.

"Given President Trump's recent threat to withdraw relief workers from Puerto Rico, it is crucial that he and the public not receive erroneously low fatality totals," the senators wrote.

Trump last week warned that this administration's response to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico cannot last "forever."

"We cannot keep [the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**], the Military & the First Responders, who have been amazing (under the most difficult circumstances) in P.R. forever!" Trump wrote in a series of tweets.

He added that the island territory's existing debt and infrastructure issues compounded problems.

The letter from Dems [echoed the calls](#) that Democratic House Reps. Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.) and Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) sent to DHS last week.

Top upper chamber lawmakers, including Sens. [Elizabeth Warren](#) (D-Mass.), [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), [Dick Durbin](#) (D-Ill.), [Kamala Harris](#) (D-Calif.), and [Sherrod Brown](#) (D-Ohio), signed off on the letter.

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Puerto Rico leader to seek more relief funds in D.C. trip Thursday (UPI)

"Time is of the essence and we need quick action," Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rosselló said.

By [Danielle Haynes](#) | Oct. 19, 2017 at 5:00 AM

[UPI](#)

Oct. 19 (UPI) -- Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rosselló said he plans to push Congress for relief for his debt-ridden, hurricane-ravaged island Thursday, during his first trip to Washington, D.C., since Hurricane Maria.

The Puerto Rican leader arrives in Washington one month after the Category 4 storm [hit the island](#), with plenty on his plate.

Rosselló said he plans to encourage Congress to pass a nearly \$5 billion [funding package](#), a loan President [Donald Trump](#) requested for the financially burdened government. The Senate also is considering a \$36.5 billion general [disaster relief package](#), passed by the House last week, that includes relief aid for Puerto Rico.

"Time is of the essence and we need quick action," Rosselló said in [an NBC News report](#) Wednesday.

The governor said he hopes to persuade federal lawmakers that the island, a U.S. territory, has the ability to manage recovery and rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Maria.

"If we are not considered in equal terms to Florida, the Virgin Islands, Texas and so forth, Congress will have to deal with a worsened humanitarian crisis, massive exodus from the island, healthcare problems and more," he said.

Trump spokeswoman Sarah Sanders confirmed the trip during a briefing with reporters Wednesday, saying Rosselló also will visit "the White House to talk about the ongoing recovery and rebuilding efforts." Rosselló said he will also meet with Homeland Security adviser Tom Bossert.

As of Wednesday, about 80 percent of Puerto Ricans -- roughly 3 million -- were [still without power](#) and one-third of homes don't have reliable drinking water.

On Tuesday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said 1,700 personnel were in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, in addition to 20,000 other federal workers.

In Washington Wednesday, demonstrators marched from Capitol Hill to FEMA headquarters to demand a bigger response from the government on hurricane relief for Puerto Rico -- as well as other U.S. locations hit by Hurricanes Irma and Harvey.

Sen. [Elizabeth Warren](#), D-Mass., told the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, "we have not forgotten you.

"You are our brothers and sisters. You are our fellow U.S. citizens. And you are part of our hearts."

Some demonstrators at the rally criticized Trump, saying his reaction to Puerto Rico's plight wasn't on par with how he handled other recent disasters.

"With Puerto Rico, he didn't even try," Melissa Mark-Viverito, speaker of the New York City Council, told [The Washington Post](#). "He's shown a real disrespect for the people of Puerto Rico. It's like he is kicking us while we are down."

The president, who's visited the island, has voiced consistent support for the territory since the disaster -- but he's also taken some criticism for remarking about Puerto Rico's economic situation.

"The wonderful people of Puerto Rico, with their unmatched spirit, know how bad things were before the H's. I will always be with them!" Trump said in [a tweet](#) last week.

Rosselló and Trump have praised the federal government's response in Puerto Rico. On Monday, former FEMA Director [James Lee Witt](#), who ran the organization under President [Bill Clinton](#), said he would give the Trump administration an A-plus for its response.

"They've maxed out probably how many people they could put there," he said. "I know they're all working frantically, but sometimes that's not enough."

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RESPONSE and RECOVERY

Here Are the Disturbing Numbers on Puerto Rico One Month After Hurricane Maria (TIME)

[Joseph Hincks](#)

Oct 18, 2017

[TIME](#)

On Sept. 20 Hurricane Maria made landfall on Puerto Rico, leaving at least 48 people dead and decimating the island's already crumbling power grid.

Texas and Miami were also ravaged by severe weather, in the two hurricanes that preceded Maria, but relief efforts there quickly restored basic infrastructure. One month on, however, much of the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico still looks the way it did immediately after the hurricane receded northwest towards the Dominican Republic.

Here is a by-the-numbers account of how things on the island currently stand.

Provisions

- **More than a third of Puerto Rican households**, or about **1 million people**, still lack running water [according](#) to CNN.
- **FEMA** says it has distributed **23.6 million liters** (6.2 million gallons) of bottled and bulk water in Puerto Rico. That figure includes water for hospitals and dialysis centers
- These deliveries equate to only **9%** of the island's drinking water requirement, going by the World Health Organization's (WHO) assessment that each person needs at least **2.5 liters**

(2/3 of a gallon) per day. Some residents are so desperate for drinking water they have [broken into](#) polluted wells at industrial waste sites.

- • The shortfall is far greater when you consider the WHO also recommends **15 liters** per person per day for basic cooking and hygiene needs. Dirty water ups the risk of diseases like cholera and at least one person has died as a result of being unable to get to dialysis treatment on time, CNN [reports](#).
- • Some **86% of grocery stores** have re-opened. But they are not necessarily stocked.
- • FEMA says **60,000 homes** need roofing help. It has delivered **38,000 tarps**.

Power and Personnel

- • **Less than 20% of Puerto Rico's power grid** has been restored and around **3 million people** are still without power, says CNN
- • The news broadcaster adds that **75% of antennas** are down so even those able to charge phones are unlikely to have cellular service.
- • **All of the island's hospitals** are now up and running, with most using back-up systems, but only **a quarter** are being supplied with power from the grid, [says Axios](#)
- • According to CNN, FEMA has deployed **1,700 personnel** in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which were also ravaged by Hurricane Maria. That's **900 less** than the **2,600 FEMA personnel** reportedly still in Texas and Florida, but the agency told CNN that around **20,000 other federal staff and military** have been deployed in response to Maria.
- • Thousands of people have [donated money or volunteered](#) to help Puerto Rico. Among them, celebrity chef José Andrés says he's serving **100,000 meals a day** on the island.

Publicity and the President

- • **Five days after Maria made landfall**, the first Trump administration officials traveled to Puerto Rico to survey the damage. That evening Trump made his first tweets since the storm hit — [mentioning](#) the debt Puerto Rico owes Wall Street. He had spent the preceding days at his golf club in New Jersey.
- • It took a further **8 days**, almost **two weeks** after the hurricane hit, for Trump to visit Puerto Rico. The **five hours** he spent there were marked by him [tossing](#) paper towels, jump-shot style, into a crowd of residents.
- • Trump later [said](#) in a tweet that Puerto Rico's crushing **\$72 billion** in public debt should be "wiped out."
- • A tweet criticizing the mayor of San Juan ranked the **third least popular** of all Trump's tweet since he assumed office, according to a metric that pits comments against likes. The approval rating on his handling of hurricanes also [dropped 20%](#) in the wake of Maria.

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'Shrinking, shrinking, shrinking': Puerto Rico faces a demographic disaster (Standard Republic)

[October 18, 2017](#)

[Standard Republic](#)

Long before the winds of Hurricane Maria reached Puerto Rico, another disaster had been wrenching and scattering the lives of island residents.

During the decade before Maria, economic decline and depopulation, a slower-moving catastrophe, had been taking a staggering toll: The number of residents had plunged by 11 percent, the economy had shrunk by 15 percent, and the government had become unable to pay its bills.

It already ranked among the worst cycles of economic decline and depopulation in postwar American history, and projections indicated that the island's slide could continue for years.

Then came Maria.

Now, even as officials in Washington and Puerto Rico undertake the recovery, residents are expected to leave en masse, fueling more economic decline and potentially accelerating a vicious cycle.

“We are watching a real live demographic and population collapse on a monumental scale,” according to Lyman Stone, an independent migration researcher and an economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The hurricane hit “might just be the kick in the pants Puerto Rico needs to really fall off this demographic cliff into total epochal-level demographic disaster.”

Whatever happens with Puerto Rico, moreover, will have far-reaching effects, because while the disaster is felt most keenly on the island, the accelerated exodus is already being felt on the mainland.

Cities popular with Puerto Ricans, such as Orlando, Hartford, Conn., and Springfield Mass., are bracing for more students, many of whom come from families living below the poverty level.

Politicians, meanwhile, are weighing the potentially significant electoral consequences of a wave of migrants who are expected to lean Democratic – especially in Florida. The swing state already boasts half a million residents who are Puerto Rican-born and more are expected in Maria’s aftermath.

Indeed, at a news conference last week, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló warned that without significant help, “millions” could leave for the U.S. mainland.

“You’re not going to get hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans moving to the states — you’re going to get millions,” Rossello said. “You’re going to get millions, creating a devastating demographic shift for us here in Puerto Rico.”

Puerto Rico Treasury Secretary Raul Maldonado has warned, meanwhile, that without more aid, the government could suffer a shutdown by the end of the month.

Prolonged bouts of economic decline and depopulation have afflicted parts of the United States before. During seven years in the 1950s, the number of people living in West Virginia dropped by 8 percent. New York lost 4 percent of its population in the 1970s. And during one stretch in the 1950s, Arkansas shed a whopping 11 percent of its people.

But in depth, the cycle of economic decline and depopulation on the island of 3.4 million people may prove the most punishing.

“Even before Maria, you had what looked like a death spiral going on,” said Gregory Makoff, a bond researcher who worked on the Treasury Department’s Puerto Rico team and now is a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation. “Now it’s no longer theoretical. In a week’s time, they’ve lost another huge chunk of the population.”

U.S. Army reserve soldiers, from Puerto Rico, attach an American flag to one of their vehicles, in an area with a sporadic electricity supply, on October 14 in Yauco, Puerto Rico.

For years before the economic slide, companies such as Merck, Johnson & Johnson and PepsiCo had saved tens of millions or more annually under a key tax break that gave U.S. companies an incentive to set up operations on the island.

But in 2006, the tax break was eliminated, taking away a key incentive for companies to operate there. It was one of many factors blamed for the island’s decline.

Among the others: The island’s electrical power system is outdated and saddles islanders with bills roughly double what they are on the mainland; an exodus of doctors has opened holes in the health-care system; and the economy’s most critical sector, manufacturing, has been shrinking even more rapidly than the rest of the economy, affected not just by the lost tax break but by global competition.

Only about 40 percent of people in Puerto Rico are employed or seeking work. By contrast, the U.S. figure for what economists call “labor force participation” is about 63 percent.

Finally, the government’s inability to pay off more than \$70 billion in debt has provoked a congressionally mandated oversight board and a new fiscal plan that calls for significant cuts to the

government and efforts to raise more taxes. Even with some optimistic assumptions, that plan predicted continuing shrinkage of the economy.

As a result, for Washington and Puerto Rican officials planning a recovery, the ongoing exodus poses a multifaceted dilemma

“They’ve got to start from the ground up,” Makoff said of any new scheme for the island.

In the short term, at least, the island is likely to see an economic boost; the rebuilding after a hurricane often injects a jolt of spending into local economies.

But according to recent research of 90 years of natural disasters in the United States, published as a National Bureau of Economic Research working paper, major natural disasters also have a range of unfavorable effects: They increase out-migration, lower home prices and raise poverty rates.

Like many on the island, Sergio M. Marxuach, policy director for the Center for a New Economy, a San Juan-based think tank, said a massive federal investment is necessary.

“We’re going to need some significant government intervention — essentially a big rescue package, not only to rebuild the economy but get it growing,” he said. “People are saying, ‘I don’t want my children to grow up in place where the economy is going to be devastated for the next 10 years.’ If enough people think that way, it’s going to be a self-reinforcing downward spiral.”

‘A lethal blow’

In addressing complaints about ongoing struggles on the island, President Trump noted this week that the disaster in Puerto Rico in many ways had begun years ago.

Puerto Rico “was in very poor shape before the hurricanes ever hit. Their electrical grid was destroyed before the hurricanes got there. It was in very bad shape, was not working, was in bankruptcy...”

Indeed, interviews with Puerto Rican business people indicated that even if the obstacles left by Maria can be overcome — most notably the widespread lack of electricity — a return to economic life as it was before the storm is untenable.

Take Frank Joseph Sugden, 51, the owner of an established family tuxedo and gown business in Bayamo. His company, Top Hat, once had three stores but now has just one. With the reductions over the years, he’s had to fire 10 employees.

Now, after Maria, weddings and other formal parties have been largely canceled through December, so his store is closed. Two of his remaining eight employees are considering leaving for good. His wife wants him to leave, too. To make up for the lost business, he’s started to do insurance work on the side.

He worries whether Puerto Rico is in a death spiral.

“I think so, yes, and I’m not too sure we’re going to come out of it,” Sugden said. “We’ve just been kind of shrinking, shrinking, shrinking, and this is kind of a lethal blow.”

Leo Aldridge, an attorney with offices in San Juan and New York, described the post-Maria migration from the island as the “Jet Blue revolution. People are buying a ticket and getting the hell out.”

But the trouble began long before the storm. After a law class he teaches at the University of Puerto Rico, he noted, his students frequently ask how they can arrange a bar exam and job on the mainland.

“All the time, kids come up to me to say, ‘What do I have to do to get off the island? What bar review do I have to take?’” Aldridge said. “This was all before the hurricane . . . People are leaving and leaving and leaving.”

Even those who evince optimism acknowledge that more difficult times lie ahead.

“We will move forward better than we were before,” said Joaquin Fernandez Quintero, the president of Telemedik, a tele-health company that employs about 400.

But he said that about 10 percent of the employees in his Mayaguez office will move to the states in the coming weeks, several of them “high-level” employees. And he’s not sure when they will be coming back.

“People are getting frustrated and depressed,” Fernandez Quintero said. “A lot of small and medium companies will be closing because they cannot maintain their operations. It will be a complicated process.”

Steven Mufson contributed to this report.

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Congress, FBI Already Investigating Potential Abuse Of Federal Funds In Puerto Rico’s Disaster Response (Government Executive)

By Eric Katz

[Government Executive](#), October 18, 2017

A congressional committee is investigating potential abuse of federal funds and resources provided to local municipalities in Puerto Rico, citing red flags raised by the FBI.

The House Natural Resources Committee probed the **Federal Emergency Management Agency** and FBI regarding accusations of “mishandling and misappropriation of emergency supplies” provided by the federal government for the people of Puerto Rico. The letters from several Republican leaders on the panel came after Douglas Leff, the FBI special agent in charge for the San Juan Field Office, announced last week he was looking into accusations of abuse of federal funds.

“With so many residents still in grave need of basic supplies, it is essential that assistance from the federal government is provided in the most efficient and effective manner possible,” the lawmakers wrote in their letters. The allegations have stated that “mayors of local municipalities, or people associated with their offices, are giving their political supporters special treatment, goods they’re not giving to other people who need them,” the committee members said, citing Leff.

They added their committee “is very troubled by these allegations.”

The special agent’s public statement did not include any mention of mayors. President Trump has publicly feuded with the mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico’s capital and largest city, blaming her for demonstrating “poor leadership” in response to the crisis and failing to coordinate with federal response efforts.

There are currently more than 20,000 federal personnel on the ground in Puerto Rico and Trump recently asked Congress for an emergency supplement of nearly \$13 billion to support those and other recovery efforts. Congress last month approved \$15 billion in emergency funding after Hurricane Harvey, which was split between **FEMA**’s disaster fund and Housing and Urban Development Community Block Development Grants.

The investigation has begun as initial response efforts are still underway, with 35 percent of households without drinking water and 80 percent of the island without power. Scott Amey, general counsel at the Project on Government Oversight, said the federal government has prioritized early oversight of disaster relief since Hurricane Katrina and the 2009 economic stimulus package. Katrina recovery was rife with fraud and abuse, with the Justice Department making charges in 1,300 cases in the aftermath of that storm. Justice has since established the National Center for Disaster Fraud, which is headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Corey Admundson, the U.S. attorney who heads up that office, as well as Attorney General Jeff Sessions, have warned of potential fraud in the wake of hurricanes Harvey and Irma, though those warnings focused on abuses from contractors rather than local governments.

“It’s never too early,” Amey said of the oversight and investigatory efforts. “Already just between Harvey, Irma and Maria the federal government has awarded—just in contracts—over \$1.6

billion. It's not too early to start investigating fraud, waste and abuse when \$1.6 billion of taxpayer dollars has gone out the door."

By looking at potential fraud early in the process, he added, the government can send a message to anyone looking to take advantage of the victims.

"As tips are coming in, I hope the Justice department takes a serious look at them," Amey said. "There's a hope there's a deterrent effect if there's strong oversight and accountability from the outset."

The White House is also conscious of potential fraud, with Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney sending a memorandum to agencies to be wary of anyone looking to abuse recovery dollars.

"Unfortunately, disasters can sometimes provide cover and opportunity for corrupt individuals to perpetrate fraud by targeting disaster survivors," Mulvaney said. "In the aftermath of a disaster, there are also frequently cases of waste and abuse, such as instances where benefits provided to survivors and communities have little nexus to recovery efforts, or where agencies continue to expend resources well beyond the period where it is reasonable to assume that recovery activities are continuing."

He added that the public's faith in government depended on an efficient disbursement of recovery funds.

"As you consider your agency costs, please keep in mind that such wasteful or fraudulent activities will not be tolerated; they ultimately undermine public trust in the federal government's ability to respond to disasters," the OMB director said. "We are counting on you to provide this diligent oversight up front and throughout the recovery process."

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POWER / INFRASTRUCTURE / COMMUNICATIONS

New Mexico delegation: US labs can help rebuild Puerto Rico (AP)

October 19, 2017 2:24 AM

[The Associated Press](#)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- Members of the state's congressional delegation are urging the Trump administration to tap the expertise of national laboratories in New Mexico to help with rebuilding efforts in Puerto Rico.

They sent a letter Wednesday to Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Elaine Duke, acting secretary of the Homeland Security Department.

The letter says the expertise and resources at Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories can be leveraged to ensure the U.S. territory is better positioned to prepare for and recover from future natural disasters. They pointed to programs that could evaluate Puerto Rico's electrical grid needs and other critical infrastructure.

The territory was hit by back-to-back hurricanes. Much of the island remains without power, hundreds of thousands of people are without running water and nearly half of the island's 51 sewage treatment plants are still out of service.

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Anuncian Reparación De Termoeléctrica (El Vocero de Puerto Rico)

By Laura M. Quintero

October 18, 2017

[El Vocero de Puerto Rico,](#)

GE contract for Electrical Energy Authority (EEE) for the replacement of beams and columns of the boilers of the Central Palo Seco had been processed at the end of August, a few weeks after the onslaught of Irma and María. Yesterday La Fortaleza announced the start of the work for the amount of \$4.7 million, with a discount of the original cost that amounted \$7 million.

El contrato a la compañía General Electric por parte de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) para el reemplazo de vigas y columnas de las calderas de la Central Palo Seco se había tramitado a finales de agosto, a pocas semanas del embate de Irma y María. Ayer La Fortaleza anunció el inicio de los trabajos por la cantidad de \$4.7 millones, con un descuento del costo original que ascendía a \$7 millones.

El secretario de Asuntos Públicos de La Fortaleza, Ramón Rosario, mencionó que el gobierno persigue que “en lo que remediamos provisionalmente la generación en el norte, atendamos los problemas de infraestructura de Palo Seco que han impedido que muchas de sus unidades no estén en servicio en este período de emergencia”.

La respuesta del gobierno surge luego de que los expertos del Colegio de Ingenieros y Agrimensores y de la Unión de Trabajadores de la Industria Eléctrica y Riego (Utier) cuestionaron los motivos para mantener apagada la central, capaz de dar estabilidad a la generación eléctrica del área metropolitana con la producción de cerca de 602 megavatios por hora.

Tan reciente como el sábado, la Oficina de Prensa de La Fortaleza había insistido en la postura de mantener cerrada la planta al compartir un estudio realizado por Island Structures Engineering, PC, que advertía del peligro que representaba la corrosión significativa y las perforaciones en las unidades 1 a la 4.

Sin embargo, el presidente del Colegio de Ingenieros, Pablo Vázquez Ruiz, dijo a este diario que en ningún momento del informe se prohibía que la central estuviera en servicio mientras se trabajaba en las reparaciones. Además, los directivos de la Utier habían advertido que solo hacía falta reforzar las medidas de seguridad, sin necesidad de cerrar la operación.

“Esperaron a la crisis”

El presidente de la Utier, Ángel Figueroa Jaramillo, aseguró que el sindicato había acordado comenzar los trabajos de reparación en noviembre de 2016. La propuesta se había discutido con el jefe de planta en aquel momento, Norberto Jiménez, con quien se acordó que el sindicato conseguiría los soldadores y el gobierno aportaría los materiales.

Incluso, indicó que la Junta de Gobierno de la AEE autorizó al director ejecutivo, Ricardo Ramos, en abril de este año a comenzar los trabajos en reparaciones de las columnas y vigas enmohecidas. “Volvieron una vez más a esperar la crisis. Esperar a que el País estuviese desesperado para entregar otro contrato más, cuando nosotros podíamos haber hecho gran parte de ese trabajo”, denunció Figueroa Jaramillo.

Cuando en agosto se informó el contrato de General Electric, la Utier puso el grito en el cielo. “Le cuestionamos el contrato, porque nosotros podíamos hacer el trabajo”, afirmó el líder sindical.

“Va a tomar tiempo”

Por su parte, el titular de Asuntos Públicos de La Fortaleza negó que se vaya a encender la planta de Palo Seco previo a que se completen las reparaciones de las unidades apagadas. Reconoció que la reparación “va a tomar un tiempo”.

Explicó que la empresa Whitefish trabaja en la reparación de las líneas de transmisión de 230,000 voltios desde la central Cambalache, en Arecibo, hasta el área metropolitana. El director de operación y distribución de la AEE, Edgardo Rivera Alvarado, había comentado a este diario -hace una semana- que al momento se habían logrado conectar las líneas de 230,000 voltios hasta Manatí.

De otra parte, Rosario dijo que con los \$128 millones aportados por la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA), la AEE se encargará de ordenar los materiales para que las

compañías contratadas para reparar el sistema energético -PowerSecure y Whitefish- puedan operar. Ha trascendido que esta última empresa opera a capacidad limitada ya que dependen de los materiales y de los equipos de la AEE.

Mientras, **FEMA** informó que los generadores para las turbinas de gas de Palo Seco llegaron el 13 de octubre y se proyecta el comienzo de operación para el 25 de octubre.

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Rosselló Reafirma Que Su Plan Es Restablecer El Sistema Eléctrico (El Nuevo Día)

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 18, 2017

Facing the financial and operational collapses of the Power Authority (EEE) and the fiscal inability of the government of Puerto Rico, the ravages caused by Hurricane Maria to the island's electrical system have become an invoice for the FEMA and Corps of Engineers that round-for the moment-the \$1,680,000.

Ante el colapso financiero y operacional de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) y la incapacidad fiscal del gobierno de Puerto Rico, los estragos causados por el huracán María al sistema eléctrico de la isla se han convertido en una factura para la Agencia Federal de Manejo de Emergencias (**FEMA**, en inglés) y el Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos (Usace, en inglés) que ronda -por el momento- los \$1,680 millones.

Esta cifra de nueve dígitos, que surgió ayer durante una entrevista con el gobernador Ricardo Rosselló Nevares, no es parte de la línea de crédito por \$4,700 millones que el gobierno puertorriqueño solicitó a **FEMA** para lidiar con su crisis de liquidez.

En la entrevista, el mandatario reconoció que la falta prolongada del servicio eléctrico podría complicar considerablemente la recuperación de la economía puertorriqueña que ya atravesaba una profunda crisis antes del ciclón.

“Cuando lo dije (el plan que contempla restaurar el 95% de la energía para mediados de diciembre) me acusaban de ser agresivo (ambicioso), y lo cierto es que lo es”, dijo Rosselló Nevares.

La semana pasada, El Nuevo Día citó estimados del Instituto Nacional de Energía y Sostenibilidad Isleña (Inesi), en la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Mayagüez, que estima que producir energía con generadores eléctricos podría costar a las familias y comercios unos 70 centavos el kilovatio hora. La cifra es casi cuatro veces el costo promedio del kilovatio hora que la AEE cobra a los abonados.

“Entiendo las dificultades. Primero, cuesta muchísimo correr un negocio en diésel, en un generador. Segundo, verdad, se supone que sea temporero, pero, ya bien sea por el costo o porque los generadores no están diseñados para operar para siempre, se van a caer”, dijo el gobernador cuando El Nuevo Día le indicó que cientos de negocios y miles de familias no tienen dinero suficiente para esperar tres meses por la restauración del sistema eléctrico.

Acto seguido, Rosselló Nevares se mostró confiado en que el 30% de los abonados tendrán electricidad antes de que termine el mes.

Agregó que trabaja en alternativas con la Administración federal de Pequeños Negocios, varios programas bajo **FEMA** y otros como el Community Development Block Grant para que los negocios puedan hacer contrapeso al impacto que supone la pérdida de electricidad en sus operaciones.

Levantar la red es primero

De acuerdo con Rosselló Nevares, el restablecimiento del sistema eléctrico debe ganar intensidad en las próximas semanas.

Hasta ayer, 380 brigadas trabajaban para restablecer el sistema, y el mandatario dijo que deben alcanzar el millar.

La mayor parte de la mano de obra pertenece a la AEE y a ese esfuerzo se han unido 40 brigadas de Jacksonville Power Authority y casi un centenar de Whitefish Energy, la firma con sede en el estado de Montana y que habría sido la única en aceptar trabajar para restaurar el sistema eléctrico de la isla a pedidos de la AEE.

Otras 200 brigadas del USACE también trabajan en la restauración del sistema.

Partiendo de los esquemas de Rosselló Nevares, si la red eléctrica de Puerto Rico fuera a dividirse en dos, el Usace tiene a su cargo la parte sureste de la isla, donde cayeron las líneas de transmisión de energía que proveen electricidad a la zona norte.

En tanto, el personal de Whitefish Energy y otros contratistas como Kobra -acuerdo que todavía se finiquitaba ayer- tendría a su cargo restablecer la electricidad en el mitad oeste de la isla para energizar la zona sur, las áreas de Mayagüez y Arecibo, así como líneas secundarias.

Además, según el gobernador, la contratación de la empresa tejana Fluor Corporation por parte de la Usace debe contribuir a agilizar los trabajos. Dicho contrato ronda los \$240 millones.

De otra parte, Rosselló Nevares señaló que, tras la contratación de General Electric para reparar las unidades de Palo Seco, ese trabajo tomará de cuatro a seis meses, por lo que, en el plazo inmediato, se contempla energizar la zona norte, utilizando los generadores de gran tamaño contratados por el Usace y todavía en proceso de instalación.

Factura a los federales

En mano de obra, dijo el gobernador, se necesitarán en un plazo de dos meses, unos \$490 millones y otros \$740 millones para materiales y equipos. A esa cuantía, se agregan casi \$450 millones en fondos provistos por el Usace.

Así las cosas y tal como anticipó hace una semana El Nuevo Día, levantar la red eléctrica solo será posible por el rescate financiero que provee FEMA y el Usace a raíz de la devastación causada por el ciclón. En esta primera etapa, costará \$1,680 millones.

Rosselló Nevares indicó que el análisis de las pérdidas en la AEE continúa, pero dijo que los daños rebasan por mucho la primera factura que pagará el gobierno federal.

Rosselló Nevares reconoció que, a futuro, Puerto Rico tendrá que recabar más apoyo del gobierno federal para asegurar que Puerto Rico cuente con una red energética más eficiente y capaz de resistir un huracán como María.

“Se van a necesitar esos fondos, esas apropiaciones federales, pero también colaboración del sector privado, en la generación, en la participación, en buscar sistemas innovadores”, dijo Rosselló Nevares al agregar que buscará hacer un balance entre los fondos que persigue a nivel federal y la entrada de entidades privadas al mercado energético de la isla.

Respaldo a las renovables

Según Rosselló Nevares, el colapso de la red eléctrica ha abierto la puerta para evaluar la forma en que se ha gestionado la energía en Puerto Rico hasta la fecha.

Entre esos proyectos que podrían reevaluarse, figura la plataforma de gas para la zona sur identificada como el Aguirre Gasport, dijo el gobernador.

“Ahoratenemos la oportunidad de repensarlo todo”, indicó.

A principios de la semana, Rosselló Nevares informó que su administración ha recibido tres propuestas de energía, entre las que se incluye una nueva planta de generación eléctrica con gas en el norte que impulsa Puma Energy. La multinacional Puma confirmó a El Nuevo Día que, desde el 2014, tiene entre sus asesores a World Professional Group, firma que cuenta entre sus integrantes al exdirector de campaña del gobernador Rosselló Nevares y exrepresentante suyo ante la Junta de Supervisión Fiscal, Elías Sánchez Sifonte.

Respaldo a las renovables

A preguntas de El Nuevo Día en torno a por qué perpetuar el modelo de plantas generadoras de gran escala que utilizan fuentes fósiles y no dar paso a la generación con renovables, Rosselló aseguró que, bajo su administración, se logrará elevar la generación eléctrica con sol o viento. Al

presente, el 2% de la energía que vende la AEE proviene de renovables, muy por debajo del objetivo de 15% que establece la ley en Puerto Rico.

“Este es el momento”, dijo Rosselló Nevares. “Nuestra expectativa es subir (la generación con fuentes renovables) entre 15% a 20%. Eso sería un salto significativo en Puerto Rico”.

Según el mandatario, además de las renovables, bajo su plan, se prevé aumentar la generación en el norte, para evitar la pérdida de eficiencia en transmisión desde el sur, e incursionar en las llamadas microrredes y redes inteligentes.

Habrà transparencia

A preguntas de El Nuevo Día en torno a cómo su administración evitará la existencia de conflictos de interés o el despilfarro de fondos en proyectos innecesarios, Rosselló Nevares dijo que también toma cartas en el asunto.

“Vamos a crear una estructura para darle coherencia y transparencia al uso de todos los fondos. No queremos caer en una situación como la de (el huracán) Katrina que, por la falta de claridad y por la falta de ejecución, se perdieron billones de dólares”, indicó.

La estructura, explicó, tendrá dos niveles de transparencia: uno para el gobierno federal para asegurar el repago de reembolsos, y, la segunda, para los ciudadanos.

“Es importante establecer que todos estos proyectos responden a un fin del bien público y que no se han decidido a espaldas del pueblo o por distintos actores”, dijo.

“Ese dinero va a ser para construir la plataforma del futuro. Voy a asegurar que exista diligencia y transparencia”, subrayó.

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Puerto Rico's capital of San Juan to be powered by APR Energy's turbines (Fox Business)

October 18, 2017

[Fox Business/Yahoo Finance](#)

It has been one month since Hurricane María charged through the Caribbean towards Puerto Rico, wiping out the island's power grid and much of its infrastructure.

As of Tuesday, only 18% of electric utility customers actually have access to power while others are dependent on diesel-fueled generators.

APR Energy says it will have the lights back on in the capital city of San Juan very quickly through its mobile power plants.

“We've already placed them on the site in a place called Palo Seco which is a power plant in San Juan,” APR Energy CEO and Chairman John Campion told FOX Business' Ashley Webster.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has hired the Jacksonville, Florida-based company to deliver two electricity-producing turbines. The APR turbine rentals, built by General Electric (NYSE:GE), will produce up to 60 megawatts of electricity to power 300,000 homes.

Campion said assessing the impact of Hurricane María on the transmission lines that power San Juan delayed the shipment of the turbines.

“Part of the problem is San Juan's power, a lot of that comes from the south and that's transmission lines coming over the mountains, and those transmissions were pretty much wiped out,” he said.

APR Energy is working very closely with the Army Corps of Engineers, General Electric, local utility companies and government officials to turn the lights back on in Puerto Rico.

“We won't solve the full problem, but we will solve part of the problem and then we will bring more machines on and solve more of the problems,” Campion said.

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Repairing Puerto Rico's Power Grid a Major Challenge (Latin America Herald Tribune)

Oct. 18

[Latin America Herald Tribune](#)

SAN JUAN – The task of restoring electricity to Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria will demand an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars, a senior US Army Corps of Engineers official told EFE on Tuesday.

The island faces “a grave situation,” Jose Sanchez said in an interview, noting that the powerful Category 4 storm damaged 80 percent of Puerto Rico’s infrastructure.

Nearly a month after the hurricane struck on Sept. 20, state-owned utility AEE is generating less than 18 percent of its pre-Maria output.

The Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce warned weeks ago that many small and medium-sized businesses may go under if the pace of power restoration does not increase, raising the prospect of more pain for an economy that has been in recession for a decade.

And Gov. Ricardo Rossello has said repeatedly that a protracted period of diminished economic activity due to the lack of electricity is likely to spur an increase in the number of Puerto Ricans – who are US citizens – relocating to the mainland United States.

The US commonwealth has lost 10 percent of its population since 2007.

In the days after Maria slammed into Puerto Rico, AEE chief Ricardo Ramos suggested that some areas of the island could wait as long as nine months to get their power back.

“We are working hard,” Sanchez said Tuesday, referring to the efforts of his team and AEE’s roughly 1,000 employees.

He said that it was impossible to give a date certain for full restoration of electricity due to the many variables at play.

Asked about Rossello’s recent statement that nearly 90 percent of AEE customers would have power by mid-December, Sanchez said only that the governor had established “a very aggressive goal.”

Explaining the scale of the challenge, Suarez said that 200 transmission towers and as many as 50,000 electric poles were down, while 10,000 kilometers (6,000 miles) of lines require repair or replacement.

“There are logistics problems in getting equipment and specialists” to the places where they are needed, Suarez said.

The Army Corps of Engineers awarded the Fluor Corporation a \$240 million contract to help rebuild AEE’s transmission and distribution system, while Ramon Rosario, the chief spokesman for the Rossello administration, announced Tuesday that the government signed a \$4.7 million accord with General Electric for repairs to the Palo Seco power plant near San Juan.

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Puerto Rico To Get Two Turbines From Florida Firm To Help Restore Power (Miami Herald)

By Carli Teproff

[Miami Herald](#), October 18, 2017

Power is on the way for hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico in the form of two giant fuel-powered generators.

APR Energy, a Jacksonville-based firm, has shipped two turbines to the island nation, which means thousands of customers will have their power restored within weeks, said Ed Patricoff, a partner in the law firm Shutts & Bowen, which is representing the company.

“This is an immediate solution,” said Patricoff, adding the turbines at the Palo Seco power plant, just outside of San Juan, arrived late last week. “It’s a stop-gap measure.”

Patricoff said APR was contacted by the governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosello, days after Hurricane Maria moved through Sept. 20, leaving the island without power. About 85 percent of the island is still without lights.

Shutts & Bowen negotiated the \$35-million contract with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The turbines are capable of producing about 50 megawatts of power by using natural gas, which will turn the lights on for about 5,600 households and businesses, Patricoff said. What they will also do, he said, is help stabilize a damaged grid, which means about 50,000 people will soon have their power restored

Patricoff said the company also secured a contract with the U.S. Virgin Islands to provide a turbine.

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Washington Must Help Puerto Rico Rebuild Its Electric Grid (RealClear Energy)

By [Silvestre Reyes](#)

October 16, 2017

[RealClear Energy](#)

Hurricane Maria hit the island of Puerto Rico almost like a nuclear bomb, and I believe the responses from both the Congress and the Trump administration have been lacking. Can you imagine if New York, Washington or Texas was in the current state that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico currently finds itself? The victims in Puerto Rico are American citizens, but English is not their first language, and for this reason, I believe that they are being treated like second-class citizens.

After Hurricane Maria swept through Puerto Rico, millions of people were cut off from the rest of the world. Residents were left with no cellphones, water or power and roads had been completely washed away leaving millions isolated from their friends, families and jobs.

The death toll on the island has reached 45 people, and access to clean water is still scarce and nearly 90 percent of the island remains dark for millions of residents. Medical officials continue to warn that the island’s healthcare system is desperately struggling to perform its most critical and basic services. The injured and ill are dying due to the lack of power and difficulty transporting patients. Grocery stores are running low on food, and people are waiting in line for hours to get gas to power their generators.

The damage to the island’s power grid is so extensive that officials still cannot predict when power will return, and many residents are facing a harsh reality: That it could be many months before they get electric service. Which brings me to the thesis of this piece: Congress and the Administration must use this situation as an opportunity to rebuild the energy grid as quickly as possible, spurring both government investment and public/private partnerships – whatever it takes to get the job done.

The Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, also known as PREPA, currently manages Puerto Rico’s electric grid. PREPA is a government-owned, electric power company responsible for electricity generation, power transmission and power distribution on the island. Now is not the time to point fingers or place blame, but by all accounts, even before Hurricane Maria, PREPA was struggling to get the job done. In fact, PREPA was \$9 billion in debt when it declared bankruptcy in July of 2017. Its equipment was already “degraded, unsafe, and unreliable” according to a [draft fiscal report](#) the company filed in April of 2017. Making matters worse, PREPA charged customers around 50% more for power than the average customer on the mainland of the United States pays.

Now is an opportunity to try and rebuild the grid in Puerto Rico and create a better system than currently exists. This means keeping in mind the importance of energy diversification to avoid recreating the same recovery problems that the island is now facing. In 2016, 47% of Puerto Rico's electricity came from petroleum, 34% from natural gas, 17% from coal, and 2% from renewable energy, according to the [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#). Moving forward, it would make sense to expand the renewable portion, allowing the renewable producers to compete for the opportunity to create an infrastructure that will last and best service the Puerto Rican people. The situation in Puerto Rico has already attracted the attention of renewable energy companies and investors.

Congress and the White House must also seek opportunities to incentivize private investment in the grid, so the restoration of the grid can accelerate faster than its current pace, which is painfully slow. As of now, PREPA is only working with a single private contractor to restore the grid and is woefully inadequate.

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El Cuerpo De Ingenieros Coloca 505 Barreras De Cemento En Guajataca (El Nuevo Día)

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 18, 2017

The Corps of Engineers already placed 505 concrete barriers and 300 bags of sand with stone in the Guajataca dam, in Quebradillas, as part of the work of mitigation that they carry out to prevent the water from leaving by the Pourer.

El Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos (USACE) ya colocó 505 barreras de concreto y 300 bolsas de arena con piedra en la represa Guajataca, en Quebradillas, como parte del trabajo de mitigación que realizan para evitar que el agua se salga por el vertedor.

El próximo paso consistirá en colocar 1,300 bolsas adicionales de arena con piedra para luego instalar bombas de agua y, de esta forma, bajar el nivel del agua, explicó el director de operaciones de contingencia y seguridad nacional del USACE, José Sánchez.

“Las bolsas de arena y piedra ahora –como no está vertiendo el agua por el vertedor–, pues me permite usar camiones para colocarlas”, explicó Sánchez, quien ha dicho que después de este trabajo, la represa requiere de una reparación permanente.

Preguntado sobre cuánto tiempo tomará concluir con los trabajos de mitigación, Sánchez dijo “unas cuantas semanas”.

“También estamos tratando de ayudar a que haya agua en los canales (contiguos) que suplen agua potable. Ya el canal está limpio y ahora vamos a poner unas tuberías para hacer un bypass de esa agua y llenar el canal”, afirmó.

“Estamos también instalando unas bombas para ayudar a bajar un poco el nivel de la represa y así bajar la presión”, agregó.

El USACE ya recibió dos bombas para hacer ese trabajo. Sánchez dijo que espera por la llegada de ocho bombas adicionales, “para seguir en el proceso de quererle dar más estabilización a los niveles de la represa”, aseveró el ingeniero sobre el trabajo cuyo costo no se ha precisado, pero es cubierto por la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias.

El alcalde de Quebradillas, Heriberto Vélez, dijo que según le explicaron, se instalarán bombas de agua en el río Guajataca para suplir los canales, que quedaron afectados por los escombros y la basura que los cubrió tras el huracán.

“La tubería que lleva agua a los canales se rompió”, dijo.

“Quebradillas no se ha afectado tanto. Más se han afectado Isabela, Aguada, Aguadilla, San Sebastián, y esos pueblos que no reciben agua del río Guajataca sino de la represa”, explicó el alcalde.

Tras el huracán, se dio a conocer que la represa tenía una fisura de 24 pulgadas. Sin embargo, el USACE, luego de una evaluación, dio a conocer que no se trataba de una rotura sino que la gran cantidad de agua que recibió la represa socavó una de sus paredes del aliviadero.

La emergencia hizo necesario el trabajo de mitigación de la USACE y que se desalojaran cientos de personas que residen cercanas a la represa. El alcalde de Quebradillas no precisó la cantidad, pero aseguró que la cifra sobrepasa el centenar. “A las familias se les avisó. Hay unas que viven fuera de sus hogares y otras que van y vienen”, afirmó.

También, unidades de Purificación de Agua de la Reserva del Ejército de Estados Unidos realizan el proceso de purificación en el lago Guajataca para distribuirla a comunidades aledañas.

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Municipios Recogerán Escombros En Vías Estatales (El Vocero)

By Laura M. Quintero

[El Vocero de Puerto Rico](#), October 18, 2017

Municipalities will pick up debris in state road.

La dirección regional de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (**FEMA**) está buscando que su sede en Washington DC le conceda mayor flexibilidad ante la emergencia que vive Puerto Rico tras el paso del huracán María, de modo que se pueda rembolsar a los municipios por recoger escombros en las carreteras que son jurisdicción del gobierno central.

La directora de la división de infraestructura de **FEMA**, Ana Morales, confirmó ayer a este diario que hicieron la solicitud a las oficinas centrales de la agencia dado a que la regulación establece que solo la entidad con jurisdicción legal sobre la infraestructura puede hacer la reclamación para obtener reembolso de gastos por las labores de limpieza.

El pedido provino de los propios alcaldes con interés y recursos para despejar las vías estatales, a las que el Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas (DTOP) o la Guardia Nacional no han podido llegar.

“Estamos trabajando con el coordinador federal (de **FEMA** en la Isla), Mike Byrne, para que se autorice que los municipios que tienen la necesidad y la urgencia de que se saquen los escombros de carreteras estatales, por razones de salud y emergencia, reciban el desembolso por los gastos incurridos”, mencionó Morales.

La funcionaria reconoció que los escombros en las vías públicas representan un riesgo a la seguridad, pues pueden servir de obstáculo a los conductores y ocasionar accidentes de tránsito.

“Tenemos una buena comunicación con la sede y el coordinador federal apoya la decisión. Entiendo que la decisión (de la capital federal) va a ser favorable”, afirmó Morales sobre la respuesta que espera baje esta misma semana.

FEMA ya ha asignado \$336.2 millones a entidades públicas para reparaciones de infraestructura, de los cuales \$12.5 millones han sido para el recogido de escombros.

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Mississippi To Take In 1,200 Prisoners From Hurricane-scarred Puerto Rico (USA Today)

[USA Today](#), October 18, 2017

YAZOO CITY, Miss. — About 1,200 federal prisoners from Puerto Rico will be housed at the federal correctional facility in Yazoo City.

U.S. Court Clerk Arthur Johnston for the Southern District of Mississippi confirmed that Mississippi agreed to house the prisoners in the aftermath of the devastation in Puerto Rico from Hurricane María.

Johnston said U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts asked federal judges to be available to help if needed on any of the prisoners' cases, but the cases will remain in the jurisdiction of Puerto Rican judges.

"Other jurisdictions helped when we had Hurricane Katrina," Johnston said. "We are delighted to return the favor."

Puerto Rico is home to one federal prison with about 1,400 inmates. The territory also has capacity for about 12,000 state prisoners.

Johnston said he was almost certain the federal prisoners were already in Mississippi. However, he said no federal judge in Mississippi has begun to handle any case yet.

Clay Chandler, Gov. Phil Bryant's spokesman, said Wednesday that he couldn't confirm federal prisoners from Puerto Rico were in Mississippi or on their way here.

Bryant released a statement saying, "I would not be in favor of accepting anyone's dangerous prisoners."

Last month, the Federal Bureau of Prisons said in a statement on its website: "As conditions on the island of Puerto Rico continued to deteriorate, creating difficulties in securing supplies and maintaining power, the Bureau felt it prudent to reduce the inmate population at MDC Guaynabo.

"We have begun the process of reducing the population at MDC Guaynabo and continue to assess damage and conditions at the facility. Given the large number of inmates that need to be relocated, the movement will take several days to complete."

The Metropolitan Detention Center Guaynabo in 1993 became the first federal prison facility built outside the continental United States. Its primary mission is to house pretrial and holdover inmates as a service to the U.S. District Courts and the U.S. Marshals Service for the Districts of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to Bureau of Prisons information.

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HEALTH / DEATHS / ENVIRONMENTAL

FEMA Dejaría De Vender Diésel A Los Hospitales (Primera Hora)

[Primera Hora \(PRI\)](#), October 18, 2017

As of next week the FEMA may stop supplying diesel to the country's private hospitals. The possibility was discussed at a meeting on Saturday at the Emergency Operations Centre (COE), which has caused great consternation in the hospital industry. Four weeks after the passage of Hurricane Maria on the island, when the national emergency still prevails.

A partir de la semana que viene la Agencia federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (**FEMA**, por sus siglas en inglés) podría dejar de suplirle diésel a los hospitales privados del País. La posibilidad fue discutida en una reunión el sábado en el Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia (COE), lo que ha causado gran consternación en la industria hospitalaria. Esto, a cuatro semanas del paso del Huracán María por la Isla, cuando aún prevalece la emergencia nacional.

Según datos del gobierno, hasta ayer en la tarde solo 17.70% de los clientes de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) contaban con este servicio, mientras 34.57% de los abonados de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcanta-rillados (AAA) continúan sin agua potable.

"Necesitamos que **FEMA** nos siga brindando este servicio, independientemente de que la organización de salud tenga

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Hospitales Le Requieren Diésel A FEMA (El Nuevo Dia)

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 18, 2017

The Association of Hospitals warned yesterday that FEMA contemplates the possibility of suspending the supply of diesel to hospital institutions that still operate through electricity generators

La Asociación de Hospitales alertó ayer que la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (**FEMA**, por sus siglas en inglés) contempla la posibilidad de suspender el suministro de diésel a las instituciones hospitalarias que aún operan mediante generadores de electricidad.

Jaime Plá, presidente ejecutivo de la Asociación, que representa a los 69 hospitales del país, dijo que gran parte de las instituciones que representa han podido mantener operaciones durante las cuatro semanas que van desde el paso del huracán María gracias a los generadores eléctricos, y que aún hoy necesitan del diésel.

Plá indicó que ayer, cuando más del 80% de la isla permanecía sin servicio de energía eléctrica, había 44 hospitales.

Necesaria la electricidad

Plá relató que, debido a la intermitencia del servicio eléctrico, crearon un grupo de trabajo para establecer un sistema más fluido de diésel a hospitales, Centros 330 y Centros de Diagnóstico y Tratamiento (CDT) mediante un contacto más directo con los proveedores de diésel, especialmente con las compañías más grandes: Puma, Total, Peerless y American Petroleum.

“Pero, mientras continúe la emergencia, necesitamos que **FEMA** siga supliendo diésel a los hospitales”, insistió.

“Hay una intención de ellos (**FEMA**) de poner otras prioridades, pero nosotros le hicimos la salvedad de que quien ha estado llevando la carga de salud son las instituciones privadas, que incluye una gama amplia de servicios, no solo hospitales, sino médicos, laboratorios, rayos X y Centros 330, entre otros”, señaló.

Plá reclamó, además, que estos servicios han continuado brindándose aun cuando no han podido facturar a los planes médicos por los problemas con las telecomunicaciones y la electricidad.

“El diésel requería dinero, una liquidez rápida, y aun así los hospitales han seguido dando servicio, muchos sin poder facturar (a los planes médicos por los servicios brindados) al no tener sistemas (de conexión de internet), especialmente los hospitales fuera del área metropolitana”, dijo.

Cruz, por su parte, relató que, incluso cuando en el Hospital de Niños San Jorge ha vuelto la energía eléctrica, necesitan de los generadores porque las constantes interrupciones del servicio ponen en riesgo la atención a sus pacientes.

Dijo que el servicio de energía eléctrica ha estado más estable esta semana que la anterior, cuando, dijo, necesitaron del apoyo de su generador para no interrumpir los servicios.

Por su parte, el administrador del Hospital del Maestro, Jorge Torres, relató una experiencia similar, y dijo que, aunque ya tienen servicio de energía que “va y viene”, continúan apoyándose en su generador cuando lo necesitan.

“**FEMA** solo nos sirvió 1,000 galones (de diésel) al principio, por el cual nos van a facturar en algún momento. Pero, básicamente, hemos corrido (con el suministro de diésel) a nivel privado. Hubo mucho assessment (evaluación) de ellos (**FEMA**), pero se quedaba ahí”, dijo.

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Langley Medics Deploy To Puerto Rico (Newport News Daily Press)

By Hugh Lessig

[Newport News \(VA\) Daily Press](#), October 18, 2017

A medical team has deployed from Langley Air Force Base to provide help for hurricane victims in Puerto Rico.

Nearly 90 airmen from the 633rd Medical Group will set up and operate a 25-bed field hospital unit, according to a news release. They left Langley in three flights, starting Oct. 15 and ending Wednesday.

The Langley team will command additional airmen from Eglin AFB in Florida and Nellis AFB in Nevada. All gathered at Langley to fly to Puerto Rico together. The team will establish an acute care clinic in Aguadilla in northwest Puerto Rico.

The team was put on standby about three weeks ago, said Col. Patricia Tate, a senior nurse with the 633rd.

The Expeditionary Medical Support field hospital can handle surgery, primary and dental care, and prepare casualties to be evacuated. It is designed to be set up quickly.

During a training exercise at Langley held one year ago, members of the 633rd set up their operation and treated airmen who needed annual exams or who had minor ailments. It added a dose of realism to the exercise.

They practiced teamwork, communication and noticed little things, such as a wheeled stool set on uneven ground. It may sound trivial, but it could become a distraction over the course of a long day.

In Puerto Rico, the Langley airmen will support the broader effort undertaken by the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**, according to Col. Jeffrey Lewis.

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BUSINESS

She was 92, stranded in Puerto Rico nursing home. Her rescue: an Uber sent from Miami (Miami Herald)

By Douglas Hanks

October 19, 2017 7:00 AM

[Miami Herald](#)

The good news out of San Juan came in a hurry for Natascha Otero-Santiago but it wouldn't last long: Her mother's 92-year-old friend, stranded on the fifth floor of a nursing home with no power, finally had a seat waiting for her on a private jet. It was leaving in 90 minutes.

Otero-Santiago, stuck in her office in Fort Lauderdale, had to find the elderly woman a ride and fast. So she pulled out her cellphone. And hailed an Uber.

"I was really surprised it was working," the public relations executive said, recalling the Oct. 4 rescue. "I got a driver right away."

Nearly a month after Hurricane Maria [wiped out most of Puerto Rico's electricity and cellular service](#), Uber has emerged as an app-based barometer for the most modern of recoveries. The ride-hailing service is operating at only about 20 percent of its capacity before the storm, largely confined to the San Juan area and its enclave of cell towers that at least offer spotty service.

"I've been busy," said Giovanni Gonzalez, an Uber driver in San Juan who went back to work about two weeks ago. With long gas lines, Gonzalez said many residents opted to hire a driver instead of using their own car. And Maria left driving a mess: Missing traffic signals worsen gridlock as police step in to direct traffic, he said, and rains can all but shut down a road.

"It rains for 10 minutes, and it's already flooded because everything is saturated," he said.

Another problem for Gonzalez is spotty cellular service. While phones are working enough for customers to hail him, Gonzalez said he can't count on a connection lasting long enough to record his full fare.

"When you have no cell service, it takes Uber a long time to end the trip," he said during a telephone interview. "There are some rides when I had to tell them: I did this ride, but it didn't record the trip."

Uber spokeswoman Julie Robinson said the company secured about 10,000 gallons of fuel for drivers to combat shortages, but that a lack of cellular service has idled almost the entire fleet. Robinson said only about 15 percent of the company's drivers were connected to the system last weekend.

Electricity is out for about 80 percent of the island. [An Oct. 18 report from the Federal Communications Commission](#) said 71 percent of the island's cellular towers are out of service.

San Juan's numbers look much better on the FCC report, with just 45 percent of its towers out of service — the lowest outage number for any area in the U.S. territory. Gonzalez said he's taken riders to Walmart for groceries, restaurants and shops. His most recent fare: a trip to a San Juan mall.

Still, Gonzalez said business hasn't been brisk enough for him to make it. He expects his trip to the mall to be his last as an Uber driver in Puerto Rico. The 29-year-old conducted a phone interview from the city's airport, where he was waiting for a flight to take him to a friend's home in Seattle.

"It's very difficult here," he said.

Nearly a month after Hurricane Maria wiped out most of Puerto Rico's electricity and cellular service, Uber has emerged as an app-based barometer for the most modern of recoveries.

Uber's skeleton fleet in San Juan was key to getting Margarita Berga de Lema to Miami two weeks after Maria hit. The 92-year-old retired airline executive was stranded without power in a nursing home, relying on daily food deliveries from staff.

Her best friend, Chia Otero, 89, was already in the Miami area when Maria hit, part of a long-planned visit with her daughter, Otero-Santiago. After the storm, the two were desperate to get Berga de Lema out of San Juan, especially after Maria left her without running water in the early days of recovery.

Otero-Santiago, director of digital strategy at Latin 2 Latin in Fort Lauderdale, grew up in Puerto Rico and had been part of the South Florida relief effort shuttling supplies to the island and helping residents flee to the mainland. Her volunteer work connected Otero-Santiago with the operator of an air ambulance leaving San Juan on October 4, with a last-minute opening for a seat.

"We called Margarita, because we knew we had to get her out of there as soon as possible," said Otero, who was in her daughter's office when news arrived about the open seat.

Berga de Lema got the call at 4 p.m. for a flight leaving 90 minutes later. She thought she could get to the airport herself. "She said, 'I'm calling my nephew,'" Otero recalled. "My daughter said, 'No, you're not calling anybody. We're sending you an Uber. He's on his way.'"

After tossing some clothes in a bag, Berga de Lema walked down five flight of steps to meet her driver, a man that Otero-Santiago's phone only identifies as Moises.

"He told me, 'Don't worry, lady,'" Berga de Lema said in an interview Wednesday from Miami. Traffic was bad, and Otero-Santiago's Uber app showed the car seeming to stop on its way to San Juan as the mother-and-daughter team followed the progress from Fort Lauderdale.

At one point, the pair in Florida had the pair in Puerto Rico on parallel phone conversations: the mother talking to Berga de Lema and the daughter to Moises. The driver drove his passenger to the private jet terminal, checking various runways until he found the waiting plane with the right tail numbers, completing the \$40 trip.

"Moises," Otero-Santiago said, "got five stars."

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Without power, Puerto Rico turns to radio for information - and company in the dark (Miami Herald)

By Jim Wyss

October 17, 2017 5:13 PM

[Miami Herald](#)

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- For several hours after Hurricane Maria slammed into the island of Puerto Rico, Jorge Blanco had an unexpected monopoly.

His station, Wapa Radio, was the only broadcaster — radio or television — still transmitting after the storm raked the U.S. territory with 110-mph winds.

Three weeks later, most media outlets are up and running again, and trying to feed the insatiable appetite for news post-Maria. But even now that the winds have died down, it's clear that the hurricane has dramatically changed the media landscape.

With 82 percent of the island still without electricity and many without cellphone service, radio has, once again, become a dominant player.

At Wapa Radio — AM 680 — Blanco said advertising is up more than 300 percent since the storm. Companies are using the radio both to advertise and to communicate with employees who no longer have phones or are scattered over the island.

Across Puerto Rico, people sit in their cars and huddle around battery-powered radios to find out where food distribution centers are, or in hopes of hearing from loved ones on call-in radio shows.

When Hurricane Mari hit Puerto Rico, it crippled the island's infrastructure. More than three weeks later, fewer than 20 percent of the population have power and that's changed the way people are getting their news. In this hard hit section of Toa Baja, locals said that radio was their only source of information.

Jim Wyss

Blanco is grateful for the new rush of advertisers but that doesn't mean his business is running without a hitch. Since the hurricane made landfall Sept. 20, he's been on a non-stop loop around the island trying to keep 10 generators full of diesel and functioning. And he fears he's one breakdown away from losing his ability to broadcast, as well as his advertisers.

"These are generators that are designed to work for days and weeks, not three or four months," he said. "I don't know how long they will last."

The government says it will have 95 percent of the power restored by Dec. 15, but many fear that goal is optimistic on a island that needs to replace at least 50,000 electricity poles and more than 6,500 miles worth of cable.

While radio is thriving, other media outlets haven't been as lucky. One of the island's largest newspapers, El Nuevo Dia, is warning staff members to prepare for layoffs blamed on declining ad sales after Maria, employees said.

Manuel Rodriguez, the lawyer and spokesman for the newspaper's labor union, said the paper was being short-sighted. The country needs print media more than ever right now, and storm-rattled employees need their jobs, he said.

"This is an incredibly complicated moment," Rodriguez said. "This is not the time to be threatening layoffs."

Also this week, Sistema TV — a channel that began broadcasting in the 1980s and focuses on public education — announced that it was closing its doors because of Maria.

Sajo Ruiz, the chief creative officer at the Sajo Garcia Alcazar advertising agency, said his company has lost at least \$2 million in business since the storm hit. Clients who had ad campaigns designed for television and online have pulled their business.

Social media campaigns have also ground to a halt amid the island's limited cellphone service. Ruiz said radio ads and truck-mounted loudspeakers have, once again, become viable and attractive options.

"We've been pushed back in time several decades," he said. "We have to reinvent the way we deliver messages."

Puerto Rico has been trapped in a decade-long recession and, even before the storm, unemployment was running in excess of 10 percent. And it's likely that some advertisers may not survive this latest hardship.

"We're hoping that the electrical grid can come back up in the metropolitan area," Ruiz said. "But it needs to happen fast or we're going to start seeing massive layoffs and companies are going to have to go out of business."

As both a television presenter and a radio host, Rafael Lenin López, has seen both sides of Maria. On his morning news show, on Radio Isla, the commercial breaks have grown from about four minutes pre-Maria to about eight minutes now, as advertisers pile in.

"Contrary to predictions and global trends in the industry, radio proved itself in this circumstance to be vital," López said. "It became something of a first responder and the first line of help."

Indeed, local government relied on Wapa Radio to send out emergency information after the storm, with the governor's office buying fuel for the station's generators in those initial hours.

There were two reasons the station managed to stay on the air, Blanco said. One was because the station's 10 employees dropped everything they were doing and volunteered their energy and time, some of them working 36 hours straight. The second reason was because the station has maintained its old, outdated technology. Other stations went off the air when their fiber optic cables were severed. But Wapa had backup microwave transmitters, he said.

López, the anchorman, said the power of radio hit him the day after the storm, when he turned the dial and found only dead air.

"It gave you a feeling of desolation," he said of the silent airwaves. "And it made you realize how important radio is just to make you feel like you have some company."

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Despite Hurricane Maria Damage, Puerto Rico Plans for a Merry Christmas (Travel Market)

by [Richard D'Ambrosio](#) / October 16, 2017

[Travel Market](#)

With nine out of ten homes still without electricity, and first responders packing San Juan hotels, you might think that Puerto Rico would feel the Grinch stole their Christmas.

But the country's tourism industry, battered and bruised but still standing, is staking a claim for its future – setting its sights on welcoming any and all visitors by Christmas.

Jose Izquierdo, executive director at the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, noted how San Juan withstood Hurricane Maria's Category 5 winds. "San Juan is a very sturdy city. We were pretty much unscathed throughout the storm, and after a full assessment, the outlook is positive."

The tourism agency has been participating in the three phases of recovery. The first – relief – ended Oct. 5, focusing mostly on providing rapid assistance to residents and the tourism industry. This included helping coordinate volunteer efforts with hotels, airlines and cruise lines.

Currently, Puerto Rico is engaged in the rebuilding phase, including taking an inventory of all of the major tourism venues and attractions like the marketplaces and beaches. This phase should last until Thanksgiving.

Airlines, many hotels, some attractions operating

The Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) is fully operational with scheduled domestic and international flights. Rafael Hernández Airport (Aguadilla), Mercedita Airport (Ponce), José Aponte de la Torre Airport (Ceiba), Fernando Luis Ribas Dominicci Airport (Isla Grande) and the Antonio Rivera Rodríguez Airport (Vieques) are operational and offering limited service.

San Juan Harbor is open and resumed homeport operations this past weekend with the departure of Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's Adventure of the Seas. Over two thousand travelers are expected to travel in and out of San Juan to embark on these journeys and more than 45 cruise departures are already scheduled from San Juan in the coming weeks.

The Mall of San Juan and Plaza Las Américas are open for shoppers, and the Puerto Rico Museum of Art in Santurce and the Ponce Museum of Art are open for visitors. Bacardi tours are expected to begin welcoming guests Nov. 1, and El Morro and other San Juan historic sites are expected to open in the coming weeks.

Eighty-four hotels are open with most taking new reservations. For a full list of the status of hotels, travel agents can visit the [Puerto Rico Now website](#).

Most of these hotels are already taking reservations for future vacations, or will be by Oct. 31, Izquierdo said. "FEMA, first responders, and volunteers with the NGOs are packing the hotels," he said. "Even bed and breakfasts are putting their rooms available for relief."

Izquierdo acknowledged that there was some erosion on San Juan's beaches, and he has been posting pictures of the waterfront and other popular venues through his Twitter handle to demonstrate how the city is getting back to normal. "By Dec. 20th, leisure travelers will be sure to enjoy our beaches," Izquierdo said.

El Yunque sustained severe damage

The news is not so good for tourism outside San Juan. "In the far west, I've seen some pictures. It will take some time."

An initial inventory has been conducted on natural attractions, like the 28,400-acre El Yunque National Forest, said Izquierdo.

A [Washington Post story](#) described the rainforest, the only one in the United States outside of Hawaii, as being decimated.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service web site currently says: "El Yunque National Forest will remain closed until further notice."

A Post reporter described how "ferns and palms have been stripped of their fronds, and hardwood trees snapped in half like twigs. What was once a blanket of emerald green draped across the mountainous landscape is now a brown pile of detritus."

"The slow return of these island gems could impact reopening timelines for those ultra-luxury properties dependent on their proximity to the parks," Izquierdo said.

Positive outlook for the future

The final pillar in Puerto Rico's plan is recovery, Izquierdo said, which he described as a "gradual restart to business as usual for tourism," including marketing to generate future visits.

During this phase, "our messaging has to be a little less than 'despacito,'" Izquierdo said, borrowing from the popular song that this year invigorated locals and tourists alike with the Puerto Rican zest for life. "Our message will be more about our resilience, that tourism is up and running."

Izquierdo called the Dec. 20th target date for this phase as "conservative."

Voluntourism and acts of kindness

Mainland travel agencies could be interested in the voluntourism packages that are increasingly popular, Izquierdo said. "It's becoming a thing here. We've seen some of our hotels working on packages to do that, coordinating with NGOs on the ground to invite travelers in to assist in the rebuilding."

One market that has been open to these trips has been what the island calls the "Diaspora," Puerto Ricans who moved to the mainland but still have family and friends on the island.

One local operator, Local Guest, has set up a [web page on Indiegogo](#), “to provide relief and volunteers to hard-hit communities.”

“We’re not only working locally with tour operators, but also at the corporate level, with the major flags down here, Marriott and Hilton, to work on packages,” said Izquierdo, who feels optimistic in part due to one of the core strengths of the island, its hospitality.

A [Washington Post reporter](#) who was trapped on the island with his family during the hurricane, wrote a story about his experience, praising the locals for how they protected his family throughout the ordeal.

“There are so many positive stories, acts of kindness, rising out of this struggle, that we will carry with us as we rebuild,” Izquierdo. “These experiences will make us stronger.”

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SURVIVOR’ STORIES

Maria survivors discuss Puerto Rico's recovery (Winchester Star)

By ONOFRIO CASTIGLIA

Oct 18, 2017

[Winchester, Va., Star](#)

WINCHESTER — Yanni Collazo and his fiancée, Ivelisse Velez, had been planning to come to the U.S. mainland from their native Puerto Rico for some time, but on their own terms, after finishing school; still, for the time being, they’re happy to be away from the devastation successive hurricanes have wrought on their home island.

“Every day you wake up and there is a different task, and it’s not like you go to [a job] ..., it’s just to try and survive the day,” said Collazo, 22. To contact family in Virginia, he and some people from his neighborhood pooled gasoline and drove to San Juan, the island’s capital, “just to make a call ..., just to say, ‘Hey, we’re alive.’”

Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory with a population of about 3.4 million. After sustaining damage during Hurricane Irma in mid-September, the island took a direct hit from Hurricane Maria two weeks later, which left the island without electricity and in a shambles. Gov. Ricardo Rosselló has called the situation the “biggest catastrophe” in the island’s history.

Four weeks later, most of the island still does not have food, water, power or phone service. In many cases, degraded homes are insufficient in providing shelter for children or the elderly. Relief and assistance have arrived on the island, but anger and resentment are mounting over the stated insufficiency of the response and the dismissive messages of President Donald Trump.

“If we are not considered in equal terms to Florida, the Virgin Islands, Texas and so forth, Congress will have to deal with a worsened humanitarian crisis, massive exodus from the island, health care problems and more,” Rosselló said in a recent statement, referring to other U.S. lands hit by recent hurricanes.

Collazo is from Canovanas, a mountain municipality east of San Juan. Velez, 21, is from Vega Baja, a town near the ocean east of San Juan. He was studying mathematics at college and was three classes away from graduating when Maria came; she was studying biomedical science and had a few semesters left.

On Wednesday evening, the couple relaxed together in a Frederick County apartment belonging to Velez’s brother, who is a manager at the local Kraft Foods plant and has lived here for about five years. Velez’s stepfather and mother, who is receiving cancer treatments, are also in Winchester. The family has been reunited here since Saturday.

“People got desperate in the first week,” Collazo said, referring to water and power needs. He recalled weathering the storm at Velez’s family home in Vega Baja — the roads turned to rivers and the back deck on the house ripped off during the storm.

“It felt like the whole house is going down,” Velez said. “We got really scared then.”

But the house made it, albeit badly damaged. After that it was patching together a survival strategy to carry the family beyond the canned food and bottled water they had managed to get at the store before the rains came.

“We waited five hours to get gas,” Velez said, recalling the armed police and military guarding the gas stations. Everything had to be purchased with cash, a problem for some families. The most immediate work came in clearing the roads as best they could, so people could move around. Collazo said his car was pretty much destroyed by fallen trees.

In their time following the hurricane, the family did not see any relief efforts reach them, Collazo said, though they heard helicopters passing overhead. “We managed by ourselves.”

Once non-military flights started leaving the island again, Velez’s brother managed to get them plane tickets at a good price and they left. They have no plans to go back.

“I’m worried,” Velez said of her grandparents, who live in a cement home and at least have a gasoline-powered generator, which they use sparingly. There’s also the millions of islanders (most of the population) who don’t live in coastal metro areas, but small towns deep in the island’s mainland — most of them probably don’t have generators, or anything else. “They don’t even have basic needs near them.”

Basic needs and related logistics are a problem on the rugged island.

Katie Williams, a 1999 graduate of James Wood High School who works in San Juan (she declined to name her employer), said in a phone call from Puerto Rico that resources on the island fluctuate. On Wednesday about 17 percent of the island had power — “but that’s generation, not distribution,” she said. “I don’t know anyone, personally, who has power at their house. ... Nobody has drinkable water.”

One problem compounds another, Williams said. For example, a Boil Water Advisory is in effect island-wide, but “how do you boil water without power?” Similarly the lack of communications logistics keeps the government from effectively getting the message to boil water out to residents. “There’s a lot of old folks who are suffering.”

There are resources on the ground, Williams said. “It’s just not happening fast enough” beyond the big coastal cities, where only a fraction of the people live.

Williams said she knows of misinformation on the mainland and political cat-fighting surrounding the crisis. Trump has been heavily criticized for his response, which has included a series of tweets blaming the island for much of its own misfortune and suggesting that federal aid will have to end altogether.

“It just makes you crazy,” Williams said, adding that consistently witnessing the trauma on the island takes a mental toll on mainland workers there; one of her co-workers had an emotional breakdown this week. “I feel like people just don’t understand, and maybe it’s the same with [Trump]... how bad it is here.”

Williams said she likes to think about the resilience of the Puerto Rican people.

“Everyone is getting tired, but there’s still that little hope.”

Resilience and brotherhood are also a pleasant topic for Macy Guthridge, a Middletown resident who has, since January, been living on the Coast Guard base in Aguadilla on Puerto Rico’s northwestern tip.

“It was like an apocalyptic movie,” Guthridge, a 25-year-old Sherando High School graduate, said of the sights following the hurricane.

Guthridge — who called Puerto Rico her “favorite place” — is scheduled to start boot camp soon; her husband, Travis Guthridge, U.S. Army, is stationed in Aquadilla and she will be as well.

On Wednesday, she was home in Middletown with her two children, ages 5 and 6, who were sent to stay with grandparents after the hurricane; she goes back this coming Wednesday.

At the base, they do not have water or power, Guthridge said. There are generators, which she knows most islanders don't have.

Travis Guthridge is a mechanic and recently could not fix a vehicle meant to carry water to an inland area — so he used his personal four-cylinder Toyota Tacoma to get a pallet of bottled water and a “water buffalo” (a large water tank) to the people.

“The people in the mountains ... they are stuck,” Macy Guthridge said. She worries about malnourishment in children and a lack of medicines to control disease.

“Last time I was there they had one hospital up and running on the whole island.”

At the airports, crowds of people are trying to leave, hoping to get commercial tickets at “\$2,500 a pop,” Guthridge said. “My family, being military, we wouldn't be able to afford [that].”

Guthridge also said she knows of misinformation on the mainland.

“Some people say wrong things when they don't know full situations.” But she stressed the coming together among people on the island. “There wasn't a ‘side,’ there wasn't a ‘we,’ there wasn't a ‘you,’ there was an ‘us.’”

Guthridge said the devastation runs deep; even when the infrastructure is rebuilt, people's businesses and livelihoods are gone. “They have nothing.” Still, she is optimistic the island will pull through. “Day-by-day, little-by-little, it does get better.”

Collazo and Velez say they are enthusiastic about their future and ready to work hard to complete their educations. To get on their feet, he has applied for a job at Costco and she has started training to work at Victoria's Secret in the Apple Blossom Mall. And they are ready for civic engagement as well. One of the first things they did after getting to the mainland was register to vote.

— Contact Onofrio Castiglia at ocastiglia@winchesterstar.com

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Stranded by Maria, Puerto Ricans Get Creative to Survive (NY Times – English & Spanish)

Three weeks after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, people across the island, especially those in remote areas, are improvising ways to stay alive.

By CAITLIN DICKERSON

OCT. 16, 2017

[New York Times](#)

- [Same story, Spanish version](#)

CHARCO ABAJO, Utuado, P.R. — When Hurricane Maria swept away the bridge that led in and out of Charco Abajo, a remote village in the mountainous inland of Puerto Rico, Carlos Ocasio and Pablo Perez Medina decided that they could not wait for help to arrive.

When the wind and rain calmed, the welder and the retired handyman climbed off the edge of the bridge and jumped down onto a pile of debris. They crossed the Vivi River, whose waters had risen to their chests, and walked several miles to a hardware store, where they bought a cable, a metal harness and wheels.

They built a pulley that now spans the gap where the bridge once was, and attached a shopping cart, after removing its legs and wheels, which they have been using to transfer food, water and supplies across the divide. Though aid groups began to arrive a week later, the two men, both 60 years old, raised a sign to describe how it felt in Charco Abajo immediately after the storm. It reads “Campamento de los Olvidados,” Spanish for “Camp of the Forgotten.”

Nearly a month after Maria devastated this island commonwealth, life remains a struggle. Even as some assistance has arrived, residents have learned to improvise without power or running water,

especially those who live in remote areas, who waited the longest for help from emergency responders and for whom recovery is the furthest off.

The winding roads that once paved a lush, tree-lined route from San Juan, the capital, to Utuado now appear post-apocalyptic. Leafless, branchless trees, denuded by Maria's winds, are tangled around one another and spill out into the highway. Rock formations, once covered with vegetation, have been stripped bare. Permanently windblown palm trees look like half-shaven heads. And houses that were once tucked neatly into the hills are now roofless, irreparably damaged wrecks sliding down the sides of them.

All that remains of the many wooden, one-room houses that once dotted the hills here are tall and narrow three-sided concrete structures that were built to protect bathroom plumbing, and which are now surrounded by piles of rubble.

Examples of the creativity of people living in the mountains are on display across the countryside. All day and night, people who live in the mountains cluster along roadways to bathe and do laundry in places where locals have redirected water from higher up that spews out of PVC pipes. They fill empty bottles and buckets, which they use to clean their homes and flush toilets.

But for some, the situation is more fragile than it is for others.

More than 100 bridges in Puerto Rico were damaged by Maria and 18 have been closed indefinitely, according to Ivonne Rosario, a spokeswoman for Puerto Rico's transportation department. An unknown number collapsed during the storm, leaving entire communities like Charco Abajo stranded.

Down a series of dirt roads that are still covered with mangled trees, fallen power lines and fiber-optic cables, Charco Abajo is home to about 120 people, mostly adults who are retired or unemployed, and a few children.

At 47, Lilia Rivera hobbles at the pace of someone decades older. She speaks in a whisper because her vocal cords are partly paralyzed. And she is hypersensitive to allergens — the slightest whiff of smoke, chemicals or perfume can cause her throat to close.

Her remote location and health problems, caused by exposure to pesticides, have made her doubly vulnerable to Hurricane Maria's destruction.

"At the beginning, I was asked if I wanted to leave," she said, sitting with her cane resting in her lap in her light-filled living room on a rural hillside in the Utuado municipality. "But wherever I go, the environment needs to be controlled. That doesn't exist in a shelter."

Despite having been trapped in their homes for three weeks and subsisting on dwindling reserves of bottled water and ready-to-eat military meals, some residents are surprisingly at ease. On the day they were visited by a reporter, they were quick to point out that other Puerto Ricans were living in worse circumstances, though it was hard to imagine whom they could have been talking about.

Marilyn Luciano, who has taken on the unofficial role of village secretary, went door-to-door to check on her neighbors. She chatted casually about her son who lives in Florida and was recently married. Ms. Luciano said that the laid-back spirit of people who live in the mountains of Puerto Rico was helping them weather the storm. "This is what we do," she said. "It's who we are."

Even Ms. Rivera and her family were hesitant to complain. She, her husband, three children and one grandchild all live together and were born and raised in Utuado.

Her husband, Leonardo Medina, a retired distribution worker in the pharmaceutical industry, was busy chopping fallen trees outside their home when they were visited by a reporter. After the family lost power, he connected Ms. Rivera's oxygen tank to a car battery, which is now powering it through an inverter.

Mr. Medina said that if his wife's health were to begin to deteriorate, he knew that his neighbors would not hesitate to help him carry her across the river. Ms. Rivera chimed in. "We Puerto Ricans are fighters and hard workers," she said. "My life depends on it."

A version of this article appears in print on October 17, 2017, on Page A18 of the New York edition with the headline: Stranded by a Hurricane, Creative Puerto Ricans Improvise to Stay Alive.

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EMIGRATION

['Millions' of Puerto Ricans may move to the mainland in hurricane's wake](#)

(Daily Kos)

[By Laura Clawson](#)

Wednesday Oct 18, 2017 · 11:29 AM SAWST

[Daily Kos](#)

Puerto Rico continues to face disaster and desperation without adequate support from the federal government. Even the [official death toll](#) shows neglect—officially 48 people have died, but a Vox investigation put the number [closer to 450](#). Even as supplies, from **FEMA** and from private donations, become more available on Puerto Rico, getting them to every household remains a challenge. The mayor of the town of Aguas Buenas is [going door to door](#) distributing food and water, but:

The town still needs more tarps to replace roofs ripped off by the storm. Thunderstorms and downpours this week have made that need even more acute.

As for what else he will find and what else he will need, that's hard to know. While more than 8,000 homes have been checked on, Mayor Garcia has about 1,500 more to go.

The devastation from the hurricane, following years of economic crisis, will likely [lead to a mass exodus](#). That will make Puerto Rico's recovery still more difficult—the island already faces a shortage of medical personnel, for instance, which will only get worse as the people who can leave do so—and it will have an effect on the cities and states that Puerto Ricans move to:

Cities popular with Puerto Ricans, such as Orlando, Hartford, Conn., and Springfield Mass., are bracing for more students, many of whom come from families living below the poverty level. Politicians, meanwhile, are weighing the potentially significant electoral consequences of a wave of migrants who are expected to lean Democratic — particularly in Florida, which already boasts half a million residents who are Puerto Rican-born.

At a news conference last week, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló warned that without significant help, “millions” could leave for the U.S. mainland. Those leaving are most likely to end up in Florida, Texas and Pennsylvania, which have been the most popular destinations for Puerto Ricans in recent years.

You'd think that electoral concern might shake loose some Republican votes for more significant government aid, but apparently contempt for Puerto Ricans (and possibly confidence in voter suppression tactics) is winning the day.

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Father leaves Puerto Rico to protect his family (WUSA)

Puerto Ricans are leaving the island -- by the thousands.

Stephanie Ramirez, WUSA 11:28 PM. EDT October 18, 2017

[WUSA, CBS, Washington DC](#)

WASHINGTON (WUSA9) - It's almost as if he's a refugee, in his own country.

"A week ago I decided to look for a safe haven for them, for my mother and for my family. That's why we're here," said Edgar Garcia.

Relying on relatives, Edgar is one many Islanders now in the states with his family, hoping to protect them from the Hurricane Maria's aftermath in Puerto Rico.

Garcia says he couldn't be more grateful for the supplies and donations, but almost a month later, he still says "Inland, we're not receiving it."

"It's like a terror movie," Garcia said, describing the past few weeks.

He showed WUSA9 the photos, which included the cement wall to his family's home on the ground.

Garcia called his Hamburger restaurant in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico a total loss. He also says his finance's hair salon in San Juan suffered damage.

The couple decided to enroll their son in school in Florida, where they can stay with family.

On Wednesday, WUSA9 spoke to Garcia as he was visiting his brother in Virginia.

Also in the state tonight, was a "Virginia is United for Puerto Rico" fundraiser. It was hosted by Virginia's First Lady, Dorothy McAuliffe.

Virginia's First Lady says money raised is going towards the fund Puerto Rico's First Lady created. It's called, Unidos por Puerto Rico or United for Puerto Rico.

Wilson Hardware Kitchen and Bar gave its space for the event, along with 25% of its food and drink proceeds.

"The main problem is the level of devastation. We never before got more than 80% of the Island without power. We still have 80% of the Island without power. At this time, less than 50% of the Island is with running water. Communications are on the verge of a collapse again," said the Congresswoman to Puerto Rico Congresswoman, Jenniffer González-Colón.

"When you see families struggling with clean water, you can't imagine that in American 2017, this is what we're seeing," said Mrs. McAuliffe.

At the Arlington fundraiser is where WUSA9 also found Garcia. His facial expression looked like one of exhaustion and despair as he looked down at the restaurant table.

Earlier, Garcia said, "it's more than hard. I got here a week ago, making arrangements to keep my family safe here. And I cannot sleep. I just can't wait to get back. It's a feeling of, that I do not belong here."

"I have to go back and work," said Garcia, "I have to get back, I will be back. Yes it's very, very difficult feeling."

Garcia says once his family is situated in Florida, he will return to Puerto Rico to help rebuild. He does not want to bring his immediate family back until that happens.

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EDUCATION

A Month After Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico Misses 'Ambitious Target' for Reopening Schools (The 74)

By [Mark Keierleber](#) | October 18, 2017

[The 74](#)

A month after Hurricane Maria devastated much of Puerto Rico, public schools on the island are slowly beginning to reopen — though classes haven't resumed. Instead, the facilities are being used as community centers and shelters.

Puerto Rico's education department had initially set a goal of having a majority of schools up and running by Monday, but that plan has now been scrapped.

In a column [published Tuesday in The Hill](#), Puerto Rico's education secretary, Julia Keleher, called a Monday reopening an "ambitious target," noting that 167 schools had reopened so far. But many of the island's 1,113 schools, which served roughly 350,000 students before the storm hit, were damaged beyond repair. Flocks of Puerto Rican children and educators [have fled in recent weeks](#) to the U.S. mainland.

"Despite scarce water and electricity, Puerto Rican students have been eager to get back to learning," Keleher wrote.

By Wednesday, however, she acknowledged that her ambitious target was not attainable, the [Associated Press](#) reported, and the official start date for Puerto Rico's schools was pushed back to Oct. 30 at the earliest.

On Wednesday, the number of schools opened as community centers was bumped up to 190, and an additional 99 buildings were being used as shelters for families displaced by the storm. For school buildings to reopen, they [must be deemed structurally sound](#) and have running water. Working electricity isn't required.

After more than a month of missed school days following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the academic calendar has been extended from May 31 to July 15, and additional changes, including a lengthened school day, are under consideration.

"We must seize this opportunity to re-envision the future for Puerto Rico's youth," Keleher wrote in The Hill. "I am determined to see how we can not only get Puerto Rican children back on track, but also open up new opportunities for them along the way. I am committed to see how our educational system can build back better so that we make smart investments in the next generation."

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CHARITY / HUMAN INTEREST / VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

Video: Bringing Safe Water To The Families Of Puerto Rico (Operation Blessing International)

Oct. 18, 2017

[Operation Blessing International](#)

Many may think that the worst is now over for the people of Puerto Rico after they were struck by Hurricane Maria. But the truth is that the residents of this island have a long road ahead of them on their way back to normalcy. The biggest need on the island right now is access to safe water. That's where Operation Blessing steps in. We are utilizing all of our expertise and repertoire of tools to get safe, potable water to the families of Puerto Rico. Watch the video to learn more.

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Veterans deploy themselves to help Puerto Rico relief (CNN)

Warfighter Disaster Response Team fights red tape

By BILL WEIR AND RACHEL CLARKE , CNN

Posted: 12:23 AM, October 19, 2017 Updated: 1:54 AM, October 19, 2017

[CNN NewsSource](#)

MAYAGUEZ, Puerto Rico (CNN) - The cavalry is here, at an abandoned airport in the far west of Puerto Rico.

Not a traditional military unit, but a bunch of guys who call themselves the Warfighter Disaster Response Team.

They're veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and when they see a need, they just go. Red tape frustrates them, especially when people are hurting and they can help, so they deploy themselves -- for free.

They've made an abandoned airport in Mayaguez their base, bedding down here and using it to collect aid and work out how to get it to remote communities.

Eric Carlson, one of the volunteer first responders, gauges the impact they have had so far.

"I think we're up to 30,000 meals, 35,000 meals," he says. "And that just with the small trucks we have and by hook and by crook getting supplies."

Collecting food, water and medical resources, and getting them out to people is still a tall order in this remote part of the island so devastated by Hurricane Maria four weeks ago.

Mudslides are visible from the air all over this mountainous region. Roads have been washed away and, with little hope of repair crews coming any time soon, residents are doing what they can to build their own bridges.

So when Carlson and his comrades turn up to help, villagers remember them.

"They were beautiful people," says Jose Rodriguez with a smile. "They purified the water. They were drinking it right there."

Carlson isn't picking a fight with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (**FEMA**) or anyone trying to help, he just feels there are some simple, practical, sensible ways to do more.

"There is a lot of stuff getting done but it could've been done so much better if they just brought the National Guard," he says.

Rotate in guardsmen who are already committed to a two-week training deployment, he suggests; put them in planes flown by the Air National Guard that also has to get its hours in.

Just give the orders: "All you guys are getting on planes in rotations and going down to Puerto Rico, 15,000 at a time. Water purification units, construction units, engineers, you guys are all coming down every two weeks."

But in a nearby community -- across one of those treacherous mudslides -- we find a man with a different point of view.

Justo Hernandez, **FEMA's** deputy federal coordinating officer for this recovery, says he has no need for such reinforcements.

He says 4,500 National Guardsmen are coming in. And while the military presence in this US territory will be just a fraction of what the United States sent to Haiti after its devastating earthquake, any more could actually be damaging.

"We have all hands on deck at this time," Hernandez says. "I don't know how much more we can bring without impacting the economy of Puerto Rico."

"If I keep flooding the place with food and water, when are the local neighbors going to open the supermarkets?"

Still, he pledges that **FEMA** will be in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for as long as the recovery takes.

Back at the abandoned Mayaguez airport, suddenly things are humming.

Alongside the veterans are troops in more traditional uniforms. These are some of the National Guardsmen **FEMA's** Hernandez was talking about. Five hundred men who've been sitting at home in Tennessee and Kentucky for two weeks, just waiting for the call to grab their bags and get here.

More are coming, they say, as they unload supplies and get things organized.

This airport had already been commandeered, but now much-needed reinforcements are here too. Many people are waiting and relying on them.

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HURRICANE SEASON

If It Quacks Like A Hurricane: Time To Rethink ‘Post-tropical Cyclone’ Terminology (Washington Post)

By Bryan Norcross

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2017

The author, Bryan Norcross, is senior hurricane specialist at The Weather Channel and author of “My Hurricane Andrew Story.”

Hurricane-force winds from the freakishly strong Atlantic storm called Ophelia raked Ireland on Monday. At least three people died, roofs were ripped off and businesses and transportation shut down across the country. The Irish Meteorological Service had been talking about the storm for days, so residents and public officials were well-informed that an unusually strong windstorm was coming.

As Ophelia was on final approach to Ireland, the storm merged with a cold front and a robust upper-atmospheric disturbance, morphing into a strong so-called post-tropical cyclone with an atmospheric structure like a powerful nor'easter.

The National Hurricane Center dutifully changed the storm's name to Post-Tropical Cyclone Ophelia in its advisories, acknowledging the meteorological transition. According to the meteorological dictionary, Ophelia was indeed a post-tropical cyclone — an organized low-pressure system that originated in the tropics, but no longer had tropic characteristics, scientifically speaking.

We are confronted with the obvious question, however: Is Post-Tropical Cyclone Ophelia really the best name for a weather system that is forecast to hit land with hurricane-force winds? No. And this is not a theoretical question for us.

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy technically morphed into Post-Tropical Cyclone Sandy before it hit land and wreaked havoc on the most populated part of the United States.

At the Weather Channel, where I work, we thought that post-tropical felt too much like “post-danger,” so we switched the name to Superstorm Sandy the moment that the meteorologically accurate but innately less threatening-sounding post-tropical nomenclature took effect.

The Irish and the Brits handled Ophelia somewhat differently. This type of storm — though not as potent as Ophelia — frequently has an impact on the British Isles in the fall and winter. To elevate and coordinate public communications, the British and Irish meteorological services got together a couple of years ago and came up with a naming scheme for potentially disruptive storms. A typical version of this storm would have been called Storm Brian had it not been born out of Hurricane Ophelia. In these situations, the naming system wisely calls for carrying on with the tropical name. Brian was pushed onto the next storm, which is due over the weekend.

Some media outlets in Britain referred to the system as Storm Ophelia, adopting their standard winter-storm-naming paradigm. The government weather services generally called it Ex-Hurricane Ophelia, which elevated the threat above a typical winter storm — a smart move. Some Irish and British media went with the full Monty and used simply Hurricane Ophelia, aligning the name with the hurricane-force winds that were forecast.

To be clear, whenever a post-tropical cyclone has posed a threat to land, the National Hurricane Center's advisories and discussions have accurately and fully highlighted the danger. Most people, however, never see those bulletins, and increasingly the headline is the message. With the decline of websites and television — except in rare extreme events — and the ascent of mobile-phone apps as the platform of choice for public consumption of weather information, it has become increasingly important that the salient point of any weather alert is succinct, clear and fits on a mobile-phone screen.

The fact is, when Hurricane Ophelia linguistically morphed into Post-Tropical Cyclone Ophelia in National Hurricane Center bulletins, the intrinsic colloquial message was that the storm had been

downgraded. The meteorological dictionary might say otherwise, but that's what people thought, and will always think.

Words matter. And if the words imply a message that is not intended, they need to be reevaluated.

The solution is to separate the nomenclature used to label a storm from its technical meteorological status. Currently, the name of the storm describes the bucket in which the weather system resides. Those buckets are differentiated by the strength of the strongest winds in the storm, the organization of the circulation, and the energy source by which the storms run — tropical and northern storms run off different meteorological processes. When a storm moves from one meteorological bucket to another, the name changes, even though the threat to land may not. Therein lies the issue.

A more modern system, which takes into account the short-form nature of mobile-phone communications, would be to retain the hurricane label through a transition to technical post-tropical-cyclone status if the storm still presents the threat of hurricane conditions on land. The meteorological transition would be noted in the text of the bulletin, of course, allowing for verification after the fact, but the unintended consequence of renaming a storm with a continuing hurricane-wind hazard to something that sounds less threatening would be removed.

Hurricane Ophelia would have remained Hurricane Ophelia until there was no longer a threat to land from hurricane-force winds. Hurricane Sandy would have remained Hurricane Sandy through landfall.

While it seems obvious that maintaining the hurricane label fits the Ophelia and Sandy scenarios, there are other situations that are less clear. Mother Nature's storms don't always fit nicely into our buckets. But the underlying premise is an important rule for modern communications. The name and the headline must substantially convey the threat from the storm to a user without an understanding of the meteorological technicalities. Otherwise, the weather alerts will be blunted at best and probably misunderstood.

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OPINION

Mike Tighe: Another reason to help Puerto Ricans: Our lives depend on them (LaCrosse Tribune)

By Mike Tighe

Oct. 19, 2017

[LaCrosse \(Wis\) Tribune](#)

Now that more of the truth is out, let the record show that Puerto Ricans aren't just slugs waiting for federal handouts but rather, they are an industrious sort who produce a lot of medical supplies to keep mainland Americans alive and kicking.

Indeed, mainland U.S. shortages of vital medical supplies manufactured in Puerto Rico could amount to karmic twists to the federal government's lackadaisical initial response to the deadly destruction visited upon the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico from hurricanes Irma and Maria just two weeks apart last month.

Many attributed the initial foot-dragging aid to the fact that many mainlanders didn't even know that the Caribbean islanders are, indeed, Americans — even those who had ventured there for sun-kissed vacation.

Others suggested that racism was at the root of the less enthusiastic response to help Puerto Ricans and Virgin Islanders than, for instance, the rushes of assistance to Texas, Louisiana or Florida, based on the assumption that the islands' populations are predominantly black.

Actually, 80.5 percent of the residents of Puerto Rico are white, mostly of Spanish origin; 8 percent are black; 0.4 percent, Amerindian; 0.2 percent Asian; and 10.9 percent other. That statistic flips for the Virgin Islands, with 76 percent black, 15.7 percent white, 1.4 percent Asian, 2.1 percent mixed and 4.9 percent other.

Still others, including the president of the Virgin Islands, blamed the victims for their own plight, with President Donald Trump stating flatly in a tweet on Sept. 30: "They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort."

At the time, "they" were struggling to survive with no electricity, little water and even less food to sustain them as they went about helping each other get by in a community effort.

Although recovery efforts have redoubled since then, the two U.S. territories remain mired as death tolls mount and relief supplies have yet to get to many rural areas and otherwise inaccessible areas.

Isn't it ironic, then, that mainland hospitals are facing increasing shortages of saline IV bags, on top of deficits that existed for several years even before the hurricanes raked the islands?

The Food and Drug Administration announced on Friday that it is working with Baxter International, a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Deerfield, Ill., to "prevent a significant shortfall of production of Baxter's sodium chloride 0.9% injection bags from its Puerto Rico facility."

In response to my request for comment, a Baxter official responded in an email that the company's production has not been the culprit for the previous dearth of IV bags. Baxter's three Puerto Rican facilities manufacture smaller bags than those, he said.

Going forward, though, Hurricane Maria's effect on Baxter plants' production may become part of the problem, although the company is trying to make it part of the solution.

In a release, Baxter said its Puerto Rican plants sustained minimal structural damage from Maria, and limited production resumed within a week of the storm. That production, however, relies on diesel generators because Puerto Rico's electricity grid remains largely ineffective, with sporadic service.

A majority of Baxter's more than 2,000 employees in Puerto Rico have returned to work, and the Baxter Foundation and employees have donated more than \$3.5 million toward recovery efforts not only in Puerto Rico but also in other hurricane-afflicted areas in southern and eastern states on the continent, according to the company.

In advance of the hurricane, Baxter moved finished products off of the island to secure storage on the mainland, the company said. It also has received temporary regulatory discretion from the FDA allowing it to import some products from Baxter facilities in Ireland and Australia to buoy its U.S. supplies.

The potential shortage is a concern for local hospitals.

Although the falling dominoes haven't affected the supply cabinets at Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse and its affiliates, "We are aware of what is taking place, and we have been monitoring" the situation, a spokesman said.

Mayo-Franciscan officials are working with Mayo Clinic Health System headquarters in Rochester, Minn., to develop contingency plans, he said. They also have adjusted clinical practices to minimize any impact on patients if supplies become pinched.

In addition to concerns about and efforts to contain health threats on the islands from stagnant, dirty water and the fact that some residents are drinking contaminated water, the FDA also sounded the alarm about the potential for shortages of critical medicines in Puerto Rican plants.

“The medical product industry has a large presence in Puerto Rico, with dozens of drug and device manufacturing facilities that are responsible for the production of products — like cancer drugs, immunosuppressants used by transplant patients and devices needed for people with diabetes,” according to a statement from FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb.

“We have undertaken swift and extensive efforts to prevent or limit the loss or shortage of multiple drugs critical to American patients due to the challenges related to refrigeration, storage and transportation,” he said.

The FDA continues efforts to “help avoid catastrophic drug shortages,” Gottlieb insisted.

It’s not too late for us to acknowledge that, instead of being freeloaders, residents of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are true, blue Americans who fly the same flag hoisted above federal, state and local buildings throughout the U.S. — not to mention NFL stadiums, NHL hockey rinks, NASCAR tracks and sundry other venues.

Let’s assume that Trump’s lip slipped when he told the Values Voter Summit in Washington last weekend: “I will tell you, I left Texas, and I left Florida, and I left Louisiana and I went to Puerto Rico — and I met with the president of the Virgin Islands.”

This meme is circulating on the internet as a joke about President Donald Trump's verbal slip in saying he had talked to the president of the U.S. Virgin Islands about hurricane damage. He actually is the Virgin Islands president, by virtue of his being president of the United States.

Surely, he was referring to Virgin Islands Gov. Kenneth Mapp, instead of implying that he was meeting with himself, as internet memes suggest and, indeed, as he indicated during the campaign that one of his main consultants is none other than himself.

Let’s also assume that we need the islanders as much for life as they need us for recovery. Maybe that will ramp up our concern and assistance, eh?

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Trump can’t stop complaining about Puerto Rico. And it shows in his policies. (Washington Post)

The island doesn't need new loans. It needs competent hurricane relief.

By Armando Valdés Prieto October 19 at 6:00 AM

Washington Post

Armando Valdés Prieto is a lawyer and political consultant and a former director of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Office of Management and Budget. In that capacity, he was also the governor's authorized representative to the Federal Emergency Management Authority.

President Trump’s approach to Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria has been coherently inhumane. He has called some Puerto Rican leaders “politically motivated ingrates,” made insensitive references to how much federal money is being spent on recovery, refused to support equitable health-care access for the island’s 3.5 million U.S. citizens, bemoaned on Twitter how federal personnel could not be in the commonwealth after the hurricane “forever” and this week complained from the Rose Garden that the military is distributing food, “something that really they shouldn’t have to be doing.”

Only one notable deviation from this narrative stands out. While on his official trip to the island, Trump told Fox News correspondent Geraldo Rivera that Puerto Rican governments “owe a lot of money to your friends on Wall Street, and we’re going to have to wipe that out. You can say goodbye to that.” Hours later, the White House was back on track: “I wouldn’t take it word for word,” said Mick Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget.

A week later, congressional Republicans unveiled a relief plan that would only add to the island’s debt load.

The disjointed thread of off-the-cuff commentary Trump has issued in real time and on social media since the storm reveals either the president's profound ignorance or his deep-seated prejudices. He seems fully unaware of the United States' history of involvement in Puerto Rico; the nation took the island as booty after the Spanish-American War in 1898 and made us citizens without consulting our forebears in 1917, just one month before the country's entry into World War I. For decades, the U.S. military was here — seemingly forever — using two small but inhabited islands as live ordnance ranges for the Navy. Trump, however, seems to believe that Puerto Rico is a foreign jurisdiction and hence, in his mind, U.S. tax dollars should not be spent to prop up the island's fragile health-care system nor to save lives and rebuild in the aftermath of a major hurricane.

But if he is in fact aware of our standing as citizens — which he certainly should be — then perhaps he is simply treating Puerto Ricans as he has women, other Latinos, African Americans, Muslims, people with disabilities and any number of other groups.

Unfortunately, the administration's actions have been entirely consistent with the president's disdainful remarks. The federal government's response has been lethargic. Last week, I interviewed the Aqueduct and Sewer Authority president on San Juan radio station NotiUno. He informed me that of 150 backup generators he had requested from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the day of the storm to keep potable water flowing into homes, only 17 had been installed in the 20 days that followed. So never mind [Trump's statement on Monday](#) that "Puerto Rico now has more generators, I believe, than any place in the world. There are generators all over the place."

Worst of all is how Washington is adding to Puerto Rico's debt burden, even after Trump's confounding remarks about it. Congress is moving to approve legislation that, although it does provide some money for recovery, includes a [\\$4.9 billion loan](#) to shore up the island's liquidity. Otherwise, due to long-standing fiscal problems and the near-total collapse of the economy since the hurricane, the commonwealth and some local governments are expected to run out of money in the next few weeks.

Nonetheless, even with the loan, Puerto Rico's nonvoting representative in Congress, Jennifer González-Colón (R), stated that the government would only be able to sustain its operations through the end of this year. So while the money is needed, the fact that it must eventually be paid back and that it is only a very short-term fix complicates future prospects and ignores deep-seated problems that need careful attention now. With over \$70 billion in debt, no reasonable means to pay it down, a dwindling population, a devastated economy and a shrinking tax base, sending this loan our way is like throwing a drowning man a gallon of water and expecting him to use it as a flotation device.

Sadly, that is what Puerto Rico has become: an island drowning in an ocean — "a very big ocean," to quote the president — of debt, incompetence and indifference.

Armando Valdés Prieto is a lawyer and political consultant and a former director of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Office of Management and Budget. In that capacity, he was also the governor's authorized representative to the Federal Emergency Management Authority.

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Hurricane Maria's Effects on Young Children in Puerto Rico (Center for American Progress)

By Cristina Novoa

October 16, 2017, 9:00 am

[Center for American Progress](#)

Puerto Rico is home to nearly 175,000 U.S. citizen children aged birth to 4 years old. More than half of these children live below the federal poverty level. Much like in the rest of the United States, young children in Puerto Rico are most likely to live in families that are barely able to meet their basic needs. Early childhood is a critical period of development. However, without access to

nutritious food, safe housing, and quality medical care, young children living in poverty can quickly fall behind their more economically advantaged peers.

Regardless of family income, all children in Puerto Rico find themselves in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria—the strongest storm to hit the island in a lifetime. The effects of poverty, combined with the trauma of living through a natural disaster, will not fade away easily: The experiences that Puerto Rico’s young children have now will directly influence their long-term physical, cognitive, and emotional development.

This column describes four critical areas of government support on which many Puerto Rican children depend.

Food assistance and security

Nutritious food is a basic need, providing the fuel that young brains and bodies require to develop. Poor nutrition and hunger are especially devastating to infants and toddlers, often leading to developmental delays in areas like language and motor skills; social and behavioral acuity; and educational advancement.

Puerto Rico imports 85 percent of its food, making food security tenuous even in the best of circumstances.

Although, in recent years, Puerto Rico has made efforts to boost food security—increasing agriculture production by 24 percent—Hurricane Maria wiped out the majority of crops overnight.

In response to Hurricane Maria, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is increasing flexibility for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which provides nutrition assistance to infants and toddlers. In 2015, 165,042 Puerto Rican women and their children participated in WIC. Threats to WIC jeopardize children’s health; future academic achievement; and long-term health and economic outcomes.

The U.S. Department of Defense reports that clean water is becoming scarce; 55 percent of Puerto Ricans lack clean drinking water, a week after the storm.

Housing

Children need safe and stable housing to thrive. Housing instability and homelessness in early childhood are associated with poorer outcomes in language, literacy, and social-emotional development. Unfortunately, Puerto Rico’s housing stock has been devastated.

Prior to Hurricane Maria, 31 percent of Puerto Rican children lived in households with a high housing burden—households that spent at least one-third of income on housing. When housing consumes one-third or more of a family’s income, it becomes less likely that the family will be able to meet all of its children’s basic needs, and it increases the threat of eviction.

Emerging reports paint a grim picture of housing conditions in Puerto Rico after the storm. Photos show entire communities with roofs torn off; news reports profile high rates of homelessness and displacement; and satellite images show widespread power outages.

Whether due to Hurricane Maria or earlier housing instability, threats to housing are devastating for children’s health. Housing insecurity is associated with poor health, lower weight, and developmental risk among infants and toddlers.

Health and medical care

Regular medical care and developmental screenings help children stay healthy. Unfortunately, severe damage to Puerto Rico’s medical facilities—paired with the federal government’s historical underinvestment in Medicaid—has limited children’s access to the care they need. The situation demands immediate action.

As of June 2015, almost half of Puerto Rico’s population was enrolled in Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Children depend on this coverage for health screenings and treatment, which will be crucial to hurricane recovery efforts.

Early education

High-quality early education can help children develop critical skills like social-emotional regulation and communication, which promote lifelong learning. In post-disaster settings, returning to school can represent a return to order and familiarity. The re-establishment of schools and child care programs—including Early Head Start and Head Start centers—is one of the practices that is most highly endorsed by humanitarian agency leaders with disaster experience.

As of 2015, 7,900 Puerto Rican children had child care subsidies. Yet without homes or centers, these are useless; families won't be able to return to work without first rebuilding infrastructure.

Puerto Rico is home to 39 Head Start and 44 Early Head Start programs, which, together, provide quality child care and early education to 35,093. In the wake of Hurricane Maria, these centers will need to be rebuilt.

In the short term, Congress should provide resources to implement home-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs, which deliver services to children where they are living. This can be a crucial way in which it can expand service. In 2016, only 5 percent of Puerto Rican children under age 3 had access to Early Head Start, and only 46 percent of children ages 3 to 5 had access to Head Start.

Head Start has a precedent of addressing mental health needs in the face of disaster. In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, the Office of Head Start worked with Head Start and Early Head Start directors in order to identify the mental health needs impacting children, families, and the community.

Conclusion

As days turn into weeks since Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, it is important to remember that delaying aid has serious consequences for young children during a critical developmental period. We know what children need; it is up to Congress and the current administration to take action.

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Helping Puerto Rico in both the short and long term (The Hill and AEI)

[Benjamin Zycher](#)

October 17, 2017 | [The Hill](#)

[AEI and The Hill](#)

Given the severe fiscal pressures facing Puerto Rico — about \$72 billion in debt — and the destruction wrought by Hurricane Maria, it is absolutely appropriate that substantial federal aid be defined and delivered by policymakers in Washington.

Accordingly, on Oct. 12, the House passed a [bill](#) including a federal loan of \$4.9 billion for Puerto Rico as part of \$36.5 billion in hurricane and wildfire relief for several states. The Senate is expected to pass the bill this week.

At the same time, policymaking is political, and the temptation to use legislation and its implementation to transfer wealth is powerful. Aid can be structured in different ways, and the longer-term effects of alternative loan provisions in particular are likely to yield very different impacts in the context of the future creditworthiness of the commonwealth and the incentives for crucial policy reforms.

Witness the recent [argument](#) from President Trump that the massive debts owed by the commonwealth will have to be “wipe[d] out.”

The president does not have the authority to effect that sort of outcome, but it is possible that the legislation eventually emerging from Congress might subordinate existing debts to the forthcoming federal loan; or the procedural implementation of the loan by federal agencies might have that effect as a practical matter.

A young girl looks back after getting her shoe stuck in the mud while carrying supplies delivered by soldiers working with a 101st Airborne Division “Dustoff” unit during recovery efforts following Hurricane Maria in Jayuya, Puerto Rico, October 5, 2017. Picture taken October 5, 2017. REUTERS/Lucas Jackson

Those threats have been directed at Wall Street, but the [reality](#) is that the creditors include retirement funds invested in Puerto Rico bonds, including tens of thousands of investors living on the island.

Subordination would be an enormous mistake imposing substantial adverse effects upon the commonwealth itself over the longer term. Consider the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), the bonded debt of which is about \$9 billion.

If the legislation eventually to be enacted subordinates Puerto Rico’s existing bondholders, that outcome would not be very different from the treatment of the [General Motors and Chrysler creditors](#) in 2009, when the Chrysler secured creditors were coerced into accepting not only far less than their legitimate claims, but fewer cents on the dollar than the GM secured creditors and the pension plans of the United Auto Workers, unsecured but vastly more favored politically.

Such subordination would be perverse in several dimensions. First, it would ignore the recent history of concessions made by the PREPA creditors, who reached a restructuring agreement with two different administrations of the Puerto Rico government.

That agreement provided debt relief of \$1.7 billion over the first five years and at least \$2 billion in the first 10 years. That deal was three years in the making, but in the end was scuttled by commonwealth officials.

As the devastation from Maria unfolded, [the creditors offered](#) a \$1-billion loan in exchange for some assurance that a portion of the debt would be paid, an offer angrily rejected by the Puerto Rico government even as the electric grid remained inoperative for almost the entire island.

Incentives for future creditors to make concessions during periods of fiscal stringency are unlikely to be strengthened by preemptive assaults on their positions.

Even before Maria, PREPA faced very large needs for capital investment for new generating plants, improved transmission and distribution networks and tightened environmental requirements. Those investment needs will require access to capital markets on terms that are affordable for future PREPA ratepayers

But that longer-term goal is inconsistent with the recent demands for ever-greater concessions from the PREPA creditors, and now with the “kiss that money goodbye” rhetoric emanating from the White House and elsewhere.

Because congressional action was required to overcome political constraints in the commonwealth, a compromise in 2016 between Congress and the Obama administration — the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) — created an oversight board with debt-restructuring powers and a formal legal process to deal with emerging disputes between the creditors and commonwealth debtors.

Subordination of existing debts would shunt these procedural safeguards aside, with future effects in terms of market expectations and incentives that cannot be salutary.

No one denies that PREPA has been [mismanaged](#) for many years. Accounts receivables practices are widely acknowledged to be dismal. PREPA gives vast amounts of power to local government agencies essentially at no charge, yielding enormous waste and upward pressure on rates for the remaining ratepayers.

Incentives to correct such practices will not be strengthened if debt service becomes easier, rather than harder to avoid, and an implementation of a subordination provision would do precisely that.

That mismanagement seems to have afflicted the PREPA response to Maria as well. Department of Energy [Situation Reports](#) on six previous hurricanes (Harvey, Irene, Irma, Katrina, Matthew and

Sandy), as well as other data, show that the average number of days needed to restore power to 90 percent of customers was 10 days.

For PREPA after Maria, about 5 percent of customers were restored after 10 days, and only 10 percent of customers after 15 days. Governor Ricardo A. Rosselló recently [expressed](#) an “expectation” for 25 percent within a month.

Perhaps conditions on the island fundamentally are more adverse than in the other afflicted regions. To the extent that that is true, it is [unclear](#) why PREPA chose not to accept aid from the American Public Power Association, the normal process for such emergencies.

Instead, PREPA [hired](#) a little-known outside contractor with limited relevant experience to restore the power lines. Whatever the realities on the ground, subordination of existing Puerto Rico debts would reduce the willingness of the capital market to invest in modernization, for PREPA and for the commonwealth more generally.

The U.S. Senate and the Trump administration should resist this temptation in Puerto Rico’s long-term interest.

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From:	Glenn, Robert </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=20EBCF8E0924452FB3C9C3464D5073ED-GLENN, ROBE>
To:	"HQ-OEA Directors </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=5931631d6e5d4b75b336d1e730a340e4-HQ-OEA Dire>"
Subject:	FW: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)
Date:	2017/10/07 19:36:39
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

FYSA

From: (b)(6)@eisac.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 8, 2017 12:05:42 AM
To: (b)(6)st@fsscc.org; (b)(6)@CenturyLink.com;
(b)(6)@ongisac.org; (b)(6)@aga.org; (b)(6)@waterisac.org; (b)(6)@aar.org;
(b)(6)s@charter.com; Glenn, Robert
Subject: Fwd: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

Sent from my iPhone

(b)(6)

Office (b)(6)

Cell (b)(6)

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6)@cci.org<mailto:(b)(6)@cci.org>>

Date: October 7, 2017 at 5:47:38 PM EDT

To: (b)(6)@nerc.net<mailto:(b)(6)@nerc.net>>

Subject: ESCC: Nate (Update 1) / Maria (Update 6)

To the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council:

The ESCC continues to coordinate closely with government partners and across the sector in support of the American Public Power Association (APPA) and its members in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and is monitoring and preparing for any potential impacts from Hurricane Nate.

Hurricane Nate

Situation Update

As of 2 p.m. EDT, Hurricane Nate was located about 195 miles south of Biloxi, MS, and was moving rapidly to the north-northwest at 25 MPH. Currently, Nate has maximum sustained winds near 90 mph, with higher gusts. Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 35 miles, primarily to the east of the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 125 miles.

The storm is beginning to impact portions of the U.S. Gulf Coast, and it is expected to make landfall near the Louisiana-Alabama border later this evening or early-Sunday as a category 2 hurricane.

A Hurricane Warning has been issued for New Orleans and Lake Pontchartrain, and for areas between Grand Isle, LA, and the Alabama/Florida border. A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for Lake Maurepas, West of Grand Isle to Morgan City Louisiana, and east of the Alabama/Florida border to Indian Pass Florida.

Nate is expected to produce 3 to 6 inches of rain, with maximum amounts of 10 inches, from the central Gulf Coast to Appalachians through the weekend, resulting in the possibility of flash flooding in these areas.

Life-threatening storm surge flooding is expected with Storm Surge Warnings in effect from Morgan City, Louisiana, to the Okaloosa/Walton County Line Florida and northern and western shores of Lake Pontchartrain

[cid:image001.jpg@01D33F93.844FC8C0]

Industry-Government Activities

The ESCC Leadership and CEOs of potentially affected companies held a call Thursday afternoon to ensure all resource needs were met and that industry leadership stayed coordinated. The ESCC Secretariat and the industry trade associations are holding daily coordination calls with DOE to discuss the Puerto Rico and USVI restoration/rebuild efforts and preparations for Hurricane Nate. These calls will continue through the weekend and into next week, as warranted.

Electric companies in Nate's path have activated their emergency response plans, are repositioning crews and equipment, and are mobilizing workers to respond to any power outages, as soon as it is safe to work. Industry mutual assistance networks are activated, and initial calls have taken place with companies to develop estimates for equipment/personnel needs associated with the expected response mission. All mutual assistance networks are reporting that there are no unmet resource needs at this time.

Last night, the President signed an emergency disaster declaration to supplement state, tribal, and local response efforts in Louisiana.

Hurricane Maria

Situation Update

The situation on the islands remains logistically challenging, but is improving. The primary focus continues to be the distribution of commodities such as food, water distribution, and fuel for temporary power at critical facilities, as well as improving security, debris removal, and road clearing measures. With the situation in Puerto Rico stabilizing, the focus is shifting to the long-duration restoration and rebuild of its critical infrastructure.

The majority of electricity customers in Puerto Rico and the USVI remain without power. In Puerto Rico, there is 125MW of generation online, and nearly 12 percent of customers have had power restored. Service also has been restored to 34 hospitals in Puerto Rico.

According to the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), crews energized several 230 and 130 kV lines this week. This weekend, crews from Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) will be arriving on the island to join the restoration effort. Industry is coordinating with DOE, FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and PREPA to identify additional resource needs.

Yesterday, Vice President Pence traveled to Puerto Rico to receive an on-the-ground briefing and to see firsthand the destruction of the island caused by hurricane Maria. Today, a congressional delegation traveled to Puerto Rico to survey the damage.

In the USVI, electric service has been restored to nearly 15% of customers on St. Thomas and 12% of customers on St. Croix, including critical facilities such as the airports and hospitals. No customers are receiving power on St. John, and only facilities with generators have power. A team from the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) is providing mutual aid on St. Thomas. A second team from DOE-WAPA arrived on September 29, and more crews and resources are expected to arrive on October 13.

Industry & Government Activities (NEW DEVELOPMENTS)

The federal government increasingly is supporting response efforts, working directly with authorities on the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, including with municipalities, businesses, and voluntary agencies on the islands.

FEMA has assigned the power restoration mission to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and now is seeking a general contractor to support them. This contract will be awarded by Tuesday, if not earlier and will be the first of three major contracts totaling more than \$400 million for general contracting work that will support the restoration efforts already underway in Puerto Rico.

USACE remains in daily contact with DOE, FEMA, APPA, the ESCC, and PREPA to coordinate plans and to leverage support from government or mainland industry partners. In the meantime, PREPA crews continue to work with Whitefish Energy Holdings, as well as with JEA and New York Power Authority crews already on the island.

USACE temporary power response teams continue to assess power needs and install generators at critical facilities. As of October 7, USACE installed 33 generators at critical facilities in Puerto Rico, powering critical infrastructure including hospitals and shelters. As of October 7, USACE installed 41 generators in USVI.

Unity of Message / Additional Resources

Given the continued restoration activities, both on the islands and in response to Hurricane Nate, below please find examples of messaging from APPA, DOE, and EEI. We also are aware of media requests regarding misinformation on the role of mutual assistance and mainland resources. The APPA FAQ was designed to provide additional ground truth, and APPA's press office continues to try to set the record straight amidst myriad inquiries.

* DOE is producing regular situation reports, which include additional information on the response efforts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as preparations for Hurricane Nate. These reports can be found at: <https://www.energy.gov/oe/downloads/hurricanes-nate-maria-irma-and-harvey-situation-reports><<http://www.mmsend42.com/link.cfm?r=1O210WDJBYniEHFUackTjQ~&pe=v-G4oPawaFCfkMO58c8WLbEn0lofL9CPke5yfob5TOV9gd8gTs7qcF2JrfJWan8S>>

* American Public Power Association's Hurricane Maria Restoration Efforts: FAQs (10/6/2017) – [see link below]

* Edison Electric Institute Hurricane Nate Talking Points (10/7/2017) – [see link below]

Thank you again to all who have offered their support and assistance. We will be working with mutual assistance teams across the industry to address any needs identified by partners on the ground in both Puerto Rico, the USVI, and states impacted by Hurricane Nate.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Secretariat if you have any questions. We will be in full coordination mode with each other and government partners for as long as necessary.

ESCC Secretariat Contact Info

APPA

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NRECA

(b)(6)@nreca.coop<mailto:(b)(6)@nreca.coop>
(b)(6)@nreca.coop<mailto:(b)(6)@nreca.coop>
(b)(6)@nreca.coop<mailto:(b)(6)@nreca.coop>

*

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Nate_Talkers_10072017.pdf<http://www.mmsend42.com/link.cfm?r=IO210WDJBYniEHFUacKTjQ~~&pe=od19yNpvcfGXhk7xbfNibDDQnACFoMEiMf9WC-wXSRveH_bAcCokhouWfzDMpMJ5K>

*

FAQs_Oct_6.pdf<<http://www.mmsend42.com/link.cfm?r=IO210WDJBYniEHFUacKTjQ~~&pe=TWf6Ip>>

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[http://www.mmsend42.com/spacer.cfm?tracking_id=37107680182&jid=38894546] Warning: This email comes from an external sender. Be cautious when opening URLs or attachments from external senders.

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Subject:	FW: Puerto Rico and USVI Response and Recovery - Atlantic Ocean - Current Situation Report - 04 Oct 17 (Update 15)
Date:	2017/10/04 06:07:08
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

FYSA

V/r (b)(6)
NRCC: DHS/IP Liaison
PH: (b)(6)

From: NICC
Sent: Wednesday, October 04, 2017 5:35 AM
Subject: Puerto Rico and USVI Response and Recovery - Atlantic Ocean - Current Situation Report - 04 Oct 17 (Update 15)

~~**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**~~

For your situational awareness:

Critical Infrastructure Involved: Communications, Critical Manufacturing, Dams, Energy (Electricity, Oil and Natural Gas), Food and Agriculture, Government Facilities (Education Facilities), Healthcare and Public Health, Transportation Systems (Aviation, Maritime, Highway and Motor Carrier), Water and Wastewater Systems

(For Mobile Devices)

As of 04 Oct, there should be an increase in interior afternoon thunderstorm activity, then showers should develop over coastal sections of southeast Puerto Rico overnight. On Thursday, more widespread moderate to heavy rainfall will occur over interior and northwestern Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, which will lead to local urban and small stream flooding and likely some larger effects on main stem rivers. A flash flood warning remains in effect for northeast Isabela and central Quebradillas through the morning, because of structural issues for Guajataca Dam. Tropical moisture will increase again toward the end of the week, which will raise the threat of widespread heavy rainfall, localized mudslides, and debris flows. Afternoon heat indices will reach into the mid to upper 90s:

- Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Protection and Programs Directorate's (NPPD) Office of Infrastructure Protection (IP) Region II continues to

coordinate with federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector partners regarding critical infrastructure impacts to the regions affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria

COMMUNICATIONS

- Factors limiting restoration continue to include transport of equipment, fuel for generators, and security for fuel / generators
- IP Region II reports there are eight mobile cell sites deployed in support of establishing cellular coverage on Puerto Rico and the USVI, with 40 more systems on the way
- On 03 Oct at 0200 EDT, the National Cybersecurity & Communications Integration Center/National Coordinating Center for Communications (NCCIC/NCC) reported no change from previous reporting

DAMS

Puerto Rico

- The Guajataca Dam spillway continues to erode and rainfall related inflows are increasing the elevation of the reservoir pool. Immediate risk reduction measures are ongoing to stabilize the dam spillway and clear outlet blockage
- United States Geological Survey (USGS) real-time hydrological readings indicate Lake Guajataca water levels have remained relatively consistent near the dam
- As of 03 Oct, 15 of 17 priority dam inspections are complete and the following actions have taken place:
 - A PREPA contractor has placed rock into the eroding right bank of the spillway and 900 super sandbags are being filled and are scheduled to be placed in the spillway today using rotary wing assets from the Pennsylvania National Guard (PANG)
 - Acquisition and mobilization of pumps / piping is actively being pursued through commercial contractors to further decrease the reservoir's water level
 - Two 18 inch pumps are slated to be airlifted to Puerto Rico and an additional eight pumps will be brought in by barge

ENERGY

(Electricity)

- As of 03 Oct, at least 5.4% of customers have power restored. PREPA expects 15% of customers will be restored within the next two weeks
- Portions of San Juan, Bayamon, Mayaguez, Carolina, Cataño, and Guaynabo have already been partially energized
- 80 out of 135 requested generator pre-installation inspections have been completed and 17 generators have been installed

(Oil and Natural Gas)

- As of 1750 EDT on 03 Oct, the Department of Transportation (DOT) reports, the Pipeline of Puerto Rico jet fuel line, which supplies the San Juan International Airport (SJU) remains shut down
- The pipeline is ready to return to service upon request of customers to ship fuel. The Generator diesel fuel resupply and gasoline for company and employee vehicles are of concern
- If unable to get diesel for its generator, loss of backup generator will result in pipeline shut down. The US DOT Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has reportedly worked with ESF-1 and ESF-12 to request assistance for the pipeline to receive fuel for its generators
- On 03 Oct, DOT reports EcoElectrica stated their liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities did not suffer any damages
- Due to the significant damage to Puerto Rico's electrical grid, EcoElectrica will reduce their operations until the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) is capable to use additional LNG supply for power generation

GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

Puerto Rico

As of 03 Oct, FEMA reports 34 of 58 government buildings remain closed. Open source reports indicate public schools are still not open, and Puerto Rico's Secretary of Education announced some public schools might be closed through 16 Oct due to storm damage and lack of power. FEMA also reports 98 of 135 post offices are now open

USVI

- 15 of 19 government buildings remain closed. Public schools are expected to re-open on 09 Oct in St. Thomas and St. John. For schools in St. Croix, they are expected to re-open sometime around 16 Oct

HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reports more than 500 of its personnel remain engaged in Puerto Rico and USVI to address residents' medical and public health needs. HHS continues to work with federal and territory partners to prioritize power restoration and fuel delivery to medical facilities

Puerto Rico

- On 03 Oct, FEMA reports power was restored to fifteen hospitals. 51 other hospitals are functioning on generator power. One Veterans' Affairs (VA) hospital and seven VA clinics are open

USVI

- FEMA reported the Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas and the Governor Juan Luis facility on St. Croix have been condemned. However, the Governor Juan Luis facility is still operating despite poor conditions. As of 02 Oct, FEMA has established a mobile medical facility in St. Thomas, and are waiting to establish another in St. Croix
- Both of the island's VA hospitals re-opened on 02 Oct

(Highway and Motor Carrier)

- On 03 Oct, FEMA reports 15 roads in Puerto Rico are open, eight roads are partially open, and the status of the remaining roads is currently unknown
- As of 03 Oct, DOT reports no major roads are closed to traffic in the U.S. Virgin Islands

(Maritime)

- As of 02 Oct, USCG reports, 13 of Puerto Rico's 14 deep-water ports are fully open or open with restrictions (Guanica- a private non-federal port remains closed) and all 9 of the U.S. Virgin Islands' deep-water ports are fully open or open with restrictions

WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

(Water)

Puerto Rico

- On 03 Oct, FEMA reported the First Whitefish Energy project will be re-energizing the line to a key dam for potable water
- PRASA reports that 56 percent of clients are without drinking water service. PRASA has 52 plants, 9 are operational, 19 are non-operational, and 24 have an unknown operational status. The second largest system in the island (serving 240,000 people) has been energized

U.S. Virgin Islands

- 101 water samples have been taken of the 161 public and private water systems on St. Croix

(Wastewater)

As of 03 Oct, PRASA reports the status of wastewater treatment plants to include 18 of the 51 are out of service:

- 32 plants are operating on alternate power
- The Puerto Nuevo plant in San Juan is the only one working on primary power

- Most of those out of service are not receiving sewage due to collapsed trunk sewers or main pump stations with operational problems
- There are at least eight damaged PRASA Wastewater facilities that are discharging upstream of PRASA Drinking Water facilities

If you have any questions or concerns about this matter, contact the NICC at 202-282-9201 or NICC@hq.dhs.gov

V/r,

NICC Watch Operations
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For information about the Hometown Security initiative, please visit:
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TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF
DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2017 5:00 AM EDT

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LEADING DHS NEWS

U.S. Judge Questions Challengers Of Trump's Latest Travel Ban

By Yeganeh Torbati

[Reuters](#), October 16, 2017

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Judge Promises Ruling On Latest Trump Travel Ban

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), October 16, 2017

A federal judge who'd ruled an earlier version of President Trump's travel ban illegal seemed more sympathetic to the latest version in a hearing Monday, questioning whether Mr. Trump's statements during the campaign can still continue to be used against everything he does on this subject at this point.

Judge Theodore Chuang, an Obama appointee to the bench sitting in Maryland, didn't give a schedule for when he plans to rule. The revised policy is slated to go into effect Wednesday, boosting to eight the number of countries subject to "extreme vetting" travel restrictions.

Judge Chuang seemed to draw distinctions between Mr. Trump's previous two executive orders in January and March and his revision issued last month, which came after what officials said was an extensive global review by the State and Homeland Security departments.

The two earlier executive orders had faced trouble in lower federal courts, with judges — including Judge Chuang — ruling the president's campaign rhetoric on Muslims had poisoned his policies. But now, Judge Chuang said, the administration appears to have done a more

thorough review tailored to try to identify countries that fail to meet security-based conditions.

The judge kept pressing anti-Trump lawyers challenging the revised travel ban to say how long the campaign can continue to tarnish the president's actions.

"They haven't given me a line," the judge said.

Mr. Trump's updated policy restricts entry from most travels who present passports from Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen. Of those, Chad, North Korea and Venezuela are new additions to the list. Sudan, meanwhile, has been dropped from the list.

The Justice Department, defending the latest policy, said there's never been any accusations that the Homeland Security and State Department officials who conducted the worldwide review are motivated by religious animus.

But the government's lawyer refused to say whether Mr. Trump's final eight-country proclamation reflected the conclusions of the two departments, saying to reveal that would violate presidential privilege.

Judge Chuang seemed disturbed by that, repeatedly pressing the government to say whether it had an obligation to tell the court if there was a conflict between the recommendations and Mr. Trump's final proclamation.

The Justice Department said the proclamation itself was all the court should be looking at.

Anti-Trump civil rights lawyers have asked the judge to issue a nationwide injunction halting the travel ban, saying the president's campaign desire to create a "Muslim ban" colors everything he does in this area.

Omar Jadwat, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union, said even as his government was

defending the second travel ban policy, Mr. Trump was calling for a tougher version.

“The result is just as the president promised — a bigger, tougher version of the same ban,” Mr. Jadwat said.

The Maryland case is one of several ongoing challenges to the travel ban. The Supreme Court last week vacated a higher-court ruling in the case, saying the revised policy overtook the previous legal arguments.

Another case out of Hawaii, which also challenged the refugee restrictions in Mr. Trump’s executive order, remains live before the justices, though that too is likely to see action soon. The 120-pause the executive order placed on refugee admissions is set to expire by the end of this month.

Judge Probes At Intent Behind Latest Travel Ban During Key Federal Court Hearing

By Lynh Bui And Matt Zapposky
[Washington Post](#), October 16, 2017

A federal judge on Monday launched skeptical questions at both government lawyers and those challenging the latest iteration of President Trump’s travel ban — probing at what government officials’ intent was in barring various types of people from eight countries from coming to the United States.

At a hearing in federal court in Greenbelt, Md., U.S. District Judge Theodore D. Chuang asked government lawyers about the extent of Trump’s involvement in coming up with the latest ban, and what those opposed to the measure felt the president could do so it would pass legal muster.

“This isn’t something the president came up with on his own, correct?” Chuang asked at one point during the proceedings.

The hearing marked one of the last opportunities for challengers of the newest ban to make their case that the judiciary should block the measure before it fully goes into effect Oct. 18. The challenge was brought by advocacy groups including the International Refugee Assistance Project and Muslims who say they will be negatively impacted by the ban.

The case in Maryland is critical, as Chuang blocked the last version of Trump’s travel ban. Those suing hope he will do so again, though judges in Hawaii and Washington, who have also

blocked previous versions of the ban, are considering separate requests to intervene.

Trump’s latest travel ban, the third iteration of the measure, affects citizens of eight countries, though some are more completely blocked from coming to the United States than others.

For Syria and North Korea, the directive blocks immigrants wanting to relocate to the United States and non-immigrants wishing to visit in some capacity. For Iran, it blocks both immigrants and non-immigrants, though it exempts students and those participating in a cultural exchange.

The ban blocks people from Chad, Libya and Yemen from coming to the United States as immigrants or on business or tourist visas, and it blocks people from Somalia from coming as immigrants. The proclamation names Venezuela, but it only blocks certain government officials.

At the hearing in Maryland, Chuang asked about the information used to develop the list of banned countries and whether he should consider Trump’s past remarks about Muslims when deciding whether to block the executive order.

Deputy Attorney General Hashim M. Mooppan stressed that it was officials at the State Department and Department of Homeland Security who helped craft the new directive, which he asserted had “nothing to do with” religion.

Challengers countered that the measure was not as targeted as it could be and that it was poisoned by the president’s past comments about wanting a ban on Muslims. The only explanation for the latest ban was that “it was produced of out desire to express animosity towards Muslims and Islam,” said lawyer Gadeir Abbas.

Legal analysts have said the new measure is more defensible than the previous versions, and those wanting it blocked might have a tougher time convincing a judge to do so. That is because the eight countries affected are not all Muslim-majority — perhaps undercutting the argument that the ban was intended to discriminate on the basis of religion — and Trump signed the measure after an intensive process of assessing the information other countries were able to provide about their travelers.

Chuang did not indicate when he would issue a ruling.

Trump Travel Ban 3.0 Hearing Ends In Maryland Without A Ruling

By Andrew M Harris

[Bloomberg News](#), October 16, 2017

Opponents of President Donald Trump's latest try at a travel ban spent 90 minutes in court on Monday urging a Maryland judge to block it. The judge didn't rule.

U.S. District Judge Theodore Chuang in Greenbelt heard from immigrant rights groups, urging him to put the ban on hold before it takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on Oct. 18. (A judge in Honolulu is weighing a similar request.) Arguments focused on technical legal issues rather than broad human rights concerns.

Opponents say Trump's order is another attempt at the Muslim ban he promised as a candidate. An attorney for the administration countered that the latest plan follows a months-long review of other countries' immigrant-vetting processes and is not faith-based. Under Trump's Sept. 24 order, travel is restricted from six nations – Chad, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Venezuela and Yemen – and blocked entirely from Syria and North Korea.

Chuang asked lawyers for the challengers to define the limits of Trump's power over immigration. He questioned Justice Department attorney Hashim Mooppanon on whether Trump's order is consistent with the findings of the Department of Homeland Security's review.

Trump's Travel Ban In Court (Again), But With A Difference

By Henry Gass

[Christian Science Monitor](#), October 16, 2017

Will the third time be the charm for the Trump administration?

An almost constant feature of Donald Trump's presidency has been litigation over his trio of travel-ban executive actions, which restrict entry into the US for certain classes of immigrants from six Muslim-majority countries.

The travel ban has also become the primary battleground for larger debates over how the judicial system should respond to a presidency that has defied governmental orthodoxy in numerous ways.

The administration has framed the executive actions as tightening immigration policies to prevent potentially dangerous individuals from entering the country. For litigants – who have included national civil rights and immigrant advocacy groups, state governments, universities,

and individuals around the country – the executive actions represent a thinly veiled attempt to implement the "Muslim ban" Trump promised during his presidential campaign.

Plaintiffs have consistently argued that the executive actions violate both congressional immigration law and the Constitution. Lower courts, for the most part, have agreed.

Yet a definitive ruling on these issues has eluded the courts so far, in part because the first two executive actions were temporary. In an unsigned opinion in June, the US Supreme Court allowed portions of the second order to go into effect, and set a date for arguments. When that 90-day ban expired, Trump issued a third iteration of the ban (set to go into effect Wednesday) and the high court dropped the earlier case. Since this third travel ban is indefinite, legal challenges to it – which began Monday afternoon with oral arguments in a federal district court in Maryland – are certain to deliver a resolution to at least some of these issues, potentially even by the end of this year's Supreme Court term.

The arguments against all three versions of the travel ban have remained largely the same, despite shifting provisions the orders (described in a postscript below). Plaintiffs argue that the third travel ban, like its predecessors, violates the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which prohibited discrimination against immigrants on the basis of nationality. They also argue that it discriminates based on religion.

Beyond that, the litigation over the past 10 months has provoked a discussion over whether courts should treat Trump differently from previous presidents. Specifically, the judiciary has traditionally given broad deference to the executive branch on immigration and national security matters. For the Trump administration, the judiciary has given more scrutiny.

"We are in the second chapter of that," says Muzaffar Chishti, director of the Migration Policy Institute's New York office. "There was some need for these courts to react to the Trump presidency... Will they react the same way nine months later as they reacted three months later?"

President Trump speaks with reporters about new travel ban restrictions before boarding Air Force One on Sept. 24 at Morristown Municipal airport in New Jersey.

The arguments that started Monday are being heard by the same person, US District

Judge Theodore G. Chuang, who blocked portions of the second travel ban order in March. It's common practice for judges to hear cases concerning issues they've reviewed before.

For this case, the government argued in its brief that the context around the new travel ban has changed enough to render it both constitutional and permissible under the INA.

Over the summer, the administration conducted a multi-agency global review of security risks posed by various countries – a review that saw Sudan dropped from the list of banned countries while adding Chad and two nations that do not have Muslim majorities, North Korea and Venezuela. The review, the government argued in its brief, “severs any connection between [the second travel ban’s] supposed religious purpose and” the third travel ban. The national-security argument

The third travel ban also doesn't run afoul of the INA, the government claims, because “Congress has set the minimum requirements for an alien to gain entry, but has also granted the President authority to impose additional restrictions when he deems appropriate.” Siding with the plaintiffs, the government added, “would severely circumscribe the President’s authority” and “threatens the ability of this or any future President to take steps that are necessary to protect the Nation.”

Indeed, the government's central argument is that the national security issues at play are beyond the court's purview. Once the administration has shown that national security interests animated the travel restrictions – interests determined by the global review – the courts have no authority to look behind a presidential order restricting the entry of certain classes of immigrants.

Looking behind Trump's executive orders was something the lower courts did routinely in prior travel ban cases. None of the three travel bans explicitly mentioned Muslims, but judges regularly cited statements from Trump and his surrogates – both during and after the campaign – as evidence that they were attempts to establish a de-facto “Muslim ban.” A panel of judges on the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, who heard a challenge to Judge Chuang's first ruling, wrote that the second travel ban order “drips with religious intolerance, animus, and discrimination” in siding against the government.

Although the Supreme Court vacated that 4th Circuit opinion, that court's reasoning could still have significant sway over Judge Chuang's reading of the third travel ban, says Steven Schwinn, a professor at the John Marshall School of Law in Chicago.

“You just cannot wipe clean the religious animus,” he says. Chuang isn't mandated to follow the 4th Circuit ruling because it was vacated, but “he can certainly adopt the same reasoning.”

The fact that the third travel ban is indefinite, unlike the previous two versions, could also be an issue for the government.

The INA says “the president can deny entry to a class of immigrants for however long he deems necessary,” says Josh Blackman, an associate professor at the South Texas College of Law in Houston. “That makes sense when it's temporary, but this is not temporary.”

Specifically, Congress amended the INA in 1965 for the central reason of making it easier for foreign nationals to visit family members (often referred to as “family reunification”). The third travel ban's indefinite duration “undermines the structure and purpose of the [INA], thereby exceeding the power that Congress delegated to the President in the statute,” wrote Peter Margulies, a professor at Roger Williams School of Law, in the Lawfare blog last month.

Professor Blackman doesn't think the ban's indefinite duration will decide the case. The “as long as the president deems necessary” language in the INA “is fairly broad,” he says. But he does think the Supreme Court could rule on the case before its current term ends next June.

“I fully expect the judges [in Maryland and Hawaii] to write what they did before. That probably won't stand up [later on] but it will probably be what happens at first,” he adds. So long as the Supreme Court can take up the case by March they could issue a decision before the 2018 summer break.

Judge Chuang asked tough questions Monday of lawyers representing plaintiffs seeking to block the executive action's implementation, Reuters reported. Chuang said he would rule later on whether to grant the plaintiffs' request.

The fact that the justices decided to allow parts of the second travel ban to go into effect but block other parts may indicate that the high court is willing to give the Trump administration more

scrutiny than previous administrations, says Mr. Chishti.

"Whether that calculus will change on the executive order 3, we don't know," he adds, "but it was not good news for the administration that the [Supreme Court] was willing to say that the administration's orders on immigration cannot be unchallenged." Postscript: How the three bans have differed

Travel ban #1: An executive order that suspended for 90 days entry to the US for immigrants from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen; suspended for 120 days the admission of all refugees to the US; indefinitely suspended the admission of refugees from Syria; and prioritized the admission of refugees who are religious minorities in their native countries.

Travel ban #2: An executive order that suspended for 90 days entry to the US for immigrants from Iran, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen (Iraq was removed); suspended for 120 days the admission of all refugees to the US, including refugees from Syria (who had previously been banned indefinitely); and removed the language prioritizing the admission of refugees who are religious minorities in their native countries.

Travel ban #3: A presidential proclamation that placed indefinite restrictions on the entry of certain classes of immigrants and nonimmigrants from Iran, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, North Korea, and Chad, as well as a small number of government officials from Venezuela.

Federal Judge Hears Challenge To Third Version Of Trump's Travel Ban

By Josh Gerstein

[Politico](#), October 16, 2017

A federal judge in Maryland is deciding whether the third time's the charm for President Donald Trump's travel ban.

Judges blunted the impact of the first two executive orders Trump issued earlier this year, measures that critics said were thinly disguised versions of the Muslim ban he promised on the campaign trail.

The latest iteration of the presidential proclamation dropped one majority Muslim country, Sudan, from an earlier list of countries that faced travel restrictions, added another largely Muslim nation, Chad, and included Venezuela and North Korea. The travel limits in

the new policy are set to take effect early Wednesday morning.

During a 90-minute session in a Greenbelt, Md., courtroom Monday, U.S. District Court Judge Theodore Chuang heard many of the same arguments that were leveled at the previous iterations of Trump's policy: that it is premised on discrimination against Muslims and that it exceeds his authority under a complex set of immigration laws.

Although Chuang blocked a key part of Trump's second travel ban order in March, the judge didn't tip his hand clearly at Monday's court session.

However, Chuang was notably persistent as he pressed Justice Department attorney Hashim Mooppan about the contents of a classified Department of Homeland Security report that government lawyers have repeatedly used to justify the third travel ban policy, which Trump issued last month.

Chuang asked Mooppan if any facts in the classified report were at odds with the findings in the directive Trump issued last month.

"Are you representing to me now as an officer of the court that there's nothing in there that inconsistent with this proclamation?" the judge asked.

Mooppan, the No. 2 attorney in DOJ's civil division, wouldn't answer directly.

"I think what's in the proclamation supports [the policy] under the relevant legal standard," the DOJ attorney said.

When the judge pressed again, Mooppan said he'd read the report but didn't think the court needed to know precisely what was in the document, which addresses deficiencies in vetting of visitors to the U.S. and information sharing with foreign governments.

Chuang invoked the 1944 Supreme Court decision that upheld the internment of Japanese Americans. Decades later, it emerged that some of the facts the government presented to the Supreme Court in that case were inaccurate.

"How is this different than *Korematsu*?" the judge asked, expressing concern that it might someday be revealed that Trump's executive action wasn't consistent with the DHS report.

Mooppan declined to elaborate on the DHS study.

"I do not think either we have the obligation nor should we ask about whether there were

disagreements among presidential advisers,” the DOJ attorney said. “We stand behind the factual representations in the proclamation.”

The evasiveness seemed to irritate the judge, who later said in an aside to Mooppan that he’d “used up a lot of time” in the exchange over the classified report.

However, Chuang also asked searching questions of those challenging Trump’s travel ban 3.0. And the Obama appointee also sounded unsatisfied with the lack of a clear response from the plaintiffs pursuing three federal lawsuits in front of him.

The judge expressed concern that if the third iteration of Trump’s travel ban policy was deemed tainted by his campaign statements calling for a ban on Muslims’ traveling to the U.S., virtually any policy he might carry out involving a majority Muslim country might be struck down.

“What is the limiting principle” that would prevent Trump from being sued “again and again?” Chuang asked American Civil Liberties Union attorney Omar Jadwat. “If this does not cure the issues that you raised the last time, what would the government have to do to demonstrate that they have?”

Jadwat declined to say but insisted that the policy the White House announced last month was clearly a direct descendant of the versions Trump attempted in January and March.

“I don’t know for sure,” the ACLU attorney said. “We’re not close to the line in this case because what we have here is the same policy a seamless transition or sequence from [Executive order 1] to EO2 to EO3.”

Chuang also pressed another lawyer for the challengers, Gadeir Abbas of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, to explain how Trump could reformulate the policy without the taint of unconstitutional bias against Muslims

“What could he do that wouldn’t run afoul of the establishment clause to at least address that problem...What would you suggest he do other than what he’s done now?” the judge asked.

“I would advise the president to stop discriminating against Muslims,” Abbas replied.

“That’s not the question,” Chuang shot back.

“I don’t have an answer to that question, but the court doesn’t need to answer that question either,” the CAIR attorney countered.

At least six legal challenges have been filed to the newest version of the travel ban. Three of

those suits are pending before Chuang. Others are pending in Honolulu, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

Legal maneuvering in the cases suggests that only the Maryland and Hawaii cases hold the possibility that the judges could rule on requests to block Trump’s new order before it takes effect Wednesday.

Chuang said Monday he will rule as soon as he can, but he did not promise to act before the third version of the travel ban kicks in.

A judge in Hawaii who issued the broadest block against the previous version of Trump’s policy has indicated he does not plan to hold a hearing but set a schedule that would allow a ruling on the legal papers before the effective date for the new directive.

Whatever Courts Say, Trump’s New Travel Ban Is Still Bad Policy

[Washington Post](#), October 16, 2017

THE SUPREME COURT last week dismissed a suit against the second iteration of President Trump’s ban on travel, which targeted six majority-Muslim countries. The ruling signals a quiet end to a potentially explosive case — for now. The legal fight against the travel ban grinds on, with multiple challenges to the newest version of this nonsensical policy working their way through the courts.

By the ban’s own terms, its provisions barring entry and immigration into the United States by citizens of certain countries expired in late September. Mr. Trump signed a revised proclamation — the third version of the ban so far — to take its place. While the travel ban’s challengers argued that the Supreme Court could still hear their case even after the new order, the court chose instead to dismiss the suit on the grounds that the second ban was no longer in place. The justices also threw out the lower court’s ruling that the ban unconstitutionally discriminated against Muslims, though Justice Sonia Sotomayor would have kept the decision in place.

The high court’s ruling didn’t touch a second case challenging the ban’s prohibition on refugee entry into the United States. But when that provision of the second order expires in late October, it’s likely that the justices will take the same approach.

This means that the groups fighting Mr. Trump’s order will have to begin their battle

against the third ban before the district court judges who heard their original complaints, instead of folding their challenge to the new order into the lawsuits already before the Supreme Court. In fact, they're doing so now. And several new suits have been filed as well.

They have a harder argument to make. In part because of the Supreme Court's ruling, the new ban is on stronger legal footing. It's the result — at least on paper — of interagency review, rather than the president's whims. It includes two non-Muslim countries and one country with a significant Christian population. Despite the judiciary's aggression in striking down past iterations of the travel ban, judges may be more hesitant this time to rule against the president, who typically enjoys broad leeway in immigration cases.

This does not make the travel ban any wiser or less cruel. The latest version may be less obviously discriminatory against Muslims, but that doesn't mean that limiting travel from a jumble of countries — including a close counterterrorism partner of the United States — will have any benefit to Americans' safety.

Many rulings against the earlier travel bans moved out well ahead from settled law to swipe at Mr. Trump. On the third round of this legal battle, the lower courts have a chance to consider the president's policy with cooler heads. But whether the Trump administration can successfully defend the revised travel ban in court is a separate question from whether the ban is good policy. That much is clear: It isn't.

Driver In Deadly Human Smuggling Case Pleads Guilty In San Antonio

By Matthew Haag

[New York Times](#), October 16, 2017

A tractor-trailer driver accused of hauling undocumented immigrants in a scorching truck through South Texas in July, which resulted in the deaths of 10 men, pleaded guilty on Monday to human smuggling charges.

The driver, James M. Bradley Jr., pleaded guilty in federal court in San Antonio to one count of transporting immigrants resulting in death and another count of conspiracy. Police officers came upon the truck in the parking lot of a San Antonio Walmart and discovered the gruesome scene of the migrants' bodies, an episode that highlighted the cruel business of human smuggling and the

desperate efforts by migrants to reach the United States.

Mr. Bradley, 61, of Clearwater, Fla., will face up to life in prison when he is sentenced in January.

"Today's admission of guilt by Mr. Bradley helps to close the door on one of the conspirators responsible for causing the tragic loss of life and wreaking havoc on those who survived this horrific incident," Shane M. Folden, the special agent with the San Antonio office of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations unit, said in a statement.

It was not clear what led Mr. Bradley, who had pleaded not guilty to the charges last month, to change his plea. A spokesman for the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas said that a plea agreement with Mr. Bradley was under seal. His guilty plea did not apply to three other charges he faces, and the spokesman said that those charges could be dismissed at the sentencing hearing in January.

Mr. Bradley's lawyer, as well as the federal prosecutor in the case, did not respond to multiple requests for comment on Monday night.

The episode, one of the nation's deadliest involving human trafficking, began on the morning of July 22 near the South Texas border town of Laredo. After making their way into the United States by crossing the Rio Grande and other means, the migrants were packed into the back of an eighteen-wheeler by smugglers, who told them that the truck had a cooling system, according to a criminal complaint.

But not long after the next leg of their journey began, the immigrants discovered that the refrigeration system was not working. Without food or water, they were trapped in what became a steaming oven as the big-rig rolled along the highway in 100-degree-plus heat.

Some people started to pass out; others banged on the truck's wall to get the driver's attention. They took turns inhaling air from a small vent hole.

About 155 miles into the trip, the truck's driver finally pulled over outside a Walmart in San Antonio, the back door swung open and some people stumbled out. A Walmart employee alerted the police after a person from the truck asked for water, the police said.

The police found eight men dead in the truck, and 31 migrants were taken to hospitals, where

two men later died. The truck had up to 200 people at one point, the immigrants told the authorities, and said they had paid fees to be transported.

Mr. Bradley faced charges in the case along with another man, Pedro Silva Segura, 47, who the authorities said was in the country illegally and living in Laredo. Mr. Silva is expected to be transferred to San Antonio to face numerous charges, including a count of conspiracy to transport and harbor immigrants for financial gain resulting in death.

Trucker In Deadly Texas Immigrant Case Pleads Guilty, Faces Life Sentence

By Jon Herskovitz

[Reuters](#), October 16, 2017

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Driver Pleads Guilty In San Antonio Human Smuggling Deaths

By Ryan Autullo

[Austin \(TX\) American Statesman](#), October 16, 2017

A truck driver pleaded guilty Monday in San Antonio to federal charges in connection to an undocumented immigrant smuggling operation that resulted in 10 deaths this summer, according to the U.S. Attorney's office for the Western District.

James Matthew Bradley, Jr., 61, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to transport immigrants resulting in death and one count of transporting immigrants resulting in death. He remains in custody and faces up to life in prison when he is sentenced in January.

By pleading guilty, Bradley, of Clearwater, Fla., admitted he transported undocumented immigrants to the United States in exchange for money. A co-defendant, Pedro Silva Segura, faces similar charges related to the operation.

San Antonio police on July 23 responded to a call at a Wal-Mart store on Interstate 35 in San Antonio where they discovered a tractor-trailer that contained 39 undocumented immigrants. Eight of them died in the overheated trailer, while two others died later at area hospitals. All of the survivors had heart rates of at latest 130 beats per minutes, authorities said.

Among the truck's occupants were four juveniles, between the ages of 14 and 17, who were unoccupied by an adult.

"Today's admission of guilt by Mr. Bradley helps to close the door on one of the conspirators responsible for causing the tragic loss of life and wreaking havoc on those who survived this horrific incident," Shane M. Folden, special agent with Homeland Security Investigations, said in a statement. "This case is a glaring reminder that alien smugglers are driven by greed and have little regard for the health and well-being of their human cargo, which can prove to be a deadly combination. HSI is committed to aggressively targeting human smugglers and smuggling organizations, who continually victimize people for profit."

Passengers estimated the traveling party at somewhere between 70 and 200 people, according to court documents. They also described differing fees for transport.

Police found the truck after a passenger approached a store employee asking for water.

Bradley forfeited to the government his tractor-trailer rig, approximately \$5,600 and a .38 caliber pistol recovered from inside the cab.

Silva Segura, 47, an undocumented immigrant residing in Laredo, is in custody and awaiting transfer to San Antonio.

Truck Driver Pleads Guilty To Charges In Fatal Immigrant Smuggling Incident

By Alex Zielinski

[San Antonio Current](#), October 16, 2017

James Bradley, Jr. pleaded guilty Monday afternoon to smuggling undocumented immigrants in the back of his semi truck — a journey that resulted in ten deaths. The federal charges leave Bradley facing life behind bars.

Bradley was arrested on July 23, after San Antonio police found 30 people packed into a windowless, sweltering cargo trailer in a southwest side Walmart. Ten of those passengers died from lack of oxygen or heat exhaustion. Many reported

that the trailer held up to 200 people at one point in the trip.

Bradley initially claimed he had no idea he was transporting people until he stopped for a bathroom break at Walmart, even though victims said they were yelling and banging from inside of

the trailer throughout the ride. On Monday, however, he told U.S. Magistrate Judge Henry Bemporad that he had, in fact, conspired to transport the immigrants for financial gain.

"This case is a glaring reminder that alien smugglers are driven by greed and have little regard for the health and well-being of their human cargo, which can prove to be a deadly combination," said Shane Folden, an agent with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, in a Monday press statement.

In admitting his guilt, Bradley also forfeited his semi truck, a pistol, and \$5,600. His sentencing hearing will take place on Jan. 22, 2018.

This comes days after the feds shut down Pyle Transportation, the trailer company that had hired Bradley to deliver one of its trailers on his truck bed — the trailer that eventually carried dozens of overheating people.

Pedro Silva Segura, a Laredo man who's been charged as a co-conspirator in this case, has yet to seek a plea deal or have a sentencing hearing. In the meantime, ICE has begun to deport the journey's traumatized survivors.

Driver Of Deadly Immigrant Smuggling Run That Killed 10 In Texas Pleads Guilty

[Associated Press](#), October 17, 2017

The driver of a semitrailer packed with at least 39 immigrants, 10 of whom died, pleaded guilty Monday to making the deadly smuggling run.

James Matthew Bradley Jr., 61, pleaded Monday in federal court in San Antonio to one conspiracy count and a count of transporting the immigrants resulting in death. He faces up to life imprisonment when he's sentenced on Jan. 22.

The Clearwater, Fla., man could have faced the death penalty had he gone to trial.

Authorities say at least 39 immigrants, most of them Mexicans, were packed into the sweltering trailer found by San Antonio police last July in a Walmart parking lot, although court records show that surviving immigrants estimated that between 70 and 180 to 200 people were carried in the trailer during the transport. The truck's refrigeration system wasn't working, and investigators say passengers had difficulty breathing as temperatures climbed.

A co-defendant, Pedro Silva Segura, 47, still faces two conspiracy counts, including one of conspiracy to transport and harbor undocumented immigrants for financial gain resulting in death. The Laredo, Tex., man also is charged with two counts of transporting undocumented immigrants resulting in serious bodily injury and placing lives in jeopardy. He remains in custody in Laredo without bond awaiting transfer to San Antonio. No trial date has been set.

"Today's admission of guilt by Mr. Bradley helps to close the door on one of the conspirators responsible for causing the tragic loss of life and wreaking havoc on those who survived this horrific incident," said Shane Folden, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations in San Antonio.

Bradley initially had denied knowing anyone was inside the trailer, telling investigators that the trailer had been sold and he was transporting it for his boss from Iowa to Brownsville, Tex. But he said he had driven to Laredo and stopped twice there before driving back to San Antonio, in the opposite direction from Brownsville.

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Driver Pleads Guilty In Fatal Immigrant-Smuggling Case

By Alicia A. Caldwell

[Wall Street Journal](#), October 16, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

DHS NEWS

Trump Doubles Down On Tough Immigration Proposals

By Rafael Bernal

[The Hill](#), October 16, 2017

President Trump on Monday praised his administration's work on immigration enforcement and border security, saying he's "going to take it five steps further."

Speaking at a full Cabinet meeting, Trump said his government has led a "bottom up effort" on immigration, singling out Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who he said is "doing a wonderful job" on the issue.

Under Trump's guidance, federal immigration enforcement has been aggressively stepped up through increased raids and deportations of previously-identified undocumented immigrants.

Earlier this month, the White House released a set of border security demands it said would need to be met as part of a legislative deal to shield from deportation recipients of the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA, which was initiated under President Obama, is being wound down under Trump, which could lead to the deportation of hundreds of thousands of immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children.

Democrats want legislation to provide a path to citizenship to DACA recipients and other young undocumented immigrants, who are often described as "Dreamers."

Trump said that the administration's plan "closes dangerous loopholes" in the law.

He said reform legislation should reduce "chain migration" that allows an immigrant to apply to bring in extended family members.

"We have to end chain migration," said Trump, in favor of "a system that puts American workers and the American taxpayer first."

Trump also echoed statements made by his chief of staff, John Kelly, in a press conference last week regarding the need for a wall on the border with Mexico.

"Mexico is having a tough time right now in terms of crime," said Trump. "More than ever now we need the wall."

Trump added that, despite the strong relations between the two countries, a wall would help isolate the United States from Mexico's drug trafficking and criminality.

"We have a very good relationship with Mexico but there are lots of problems," he said.

Week Ahead: Republicans Aim To Move Quickly On Trump DHS Pick

By Morgan Chalfant

[The Hill](#), October 16, 2017

President Trump has officially chosen Kirstjen Nielsen to lead the Department of Homeland Security, and now the focus is shifting to the Senate to begin her confirmation process.

With the Senate back in session in the coming week, a confirmation hearing could come within days.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), who chairs the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, said he plans to work with Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), the ranking member, to "expedite the consideration of Ms. Nielsen's nomination and help make America safer and more secure."

Trump used his remarks at Nielsen's nomination ceremony on Thursday to urge the Senate to bypass party politics and swiftly confirm her.

"In light of the serious threats facing our country, and the urgent disaster recovery efforts, I call upon the Senate to put politics aside and confirm this tremendously qualified and talented nominee with a strong bipartisan vote," Trump said.

An aide to the Homeland Security Committee said that Johnson hopes to schedule Nielsen's confirmation hearing as soon as possible.

The committee already has a hearing scheduled for Wednesday on a group of nominees for positions at the Office of Personnel Management and the General Services Administration.

Nielsen served as John Kelly's top aide at Homeland Security when he helmed the department. When Trump named Kelly as his new chief of staff, Nielsen moved with him to the White House.

Nielsen's nomination has been cheered by Republicans, but drawn ire from some Democrats. Nielsen, who served on George W. Bush's Homeland Security Council, was a senior fellow at George Washington University's Center for Cyber and Homeland Security before joining the Trump administration.

Homeland Security is the lead agency protecting civilian federal networks and critical infrastructure from cyberattacks.

As senators return for the week, it remains to be seen if the Senate Armed Services Committee will comply with Sen. Jeanne Shaheen's (D-N.H.) request to hold a hearing on Kaspersky Lab, in light of reports that Russian government hackers exploited the company's software to steal U.S. spy secrets.

The House Science, Space and Technology Committee is already planning to hold a series of hearings on Kaspersky Lab beginning later this month when the House reconvenes from its weeklong October break, a sign the committee's

probe is expanding in the wake of recent revelations.

Before House lawmakers left town on Thursday, they voted to begin negotiations with the Senate to hammer out a final version of the annual defense policy bill.

Now it's up to the Senate to approve the motion to go to conference on the National Defense Authorization Act.

Both the House and Senate versions of the bill have numerous cyber-related provisions. Among the controversial measures in the Senate-approved bill is one that would establish a policy for cyber warfare. The White House has objected to the provision, saying that it would undermine President Trump's authority.

The coming week could also bring more information about Russia's use of social media platforms in its effort to influence the 2016 presidential election. The House Intelligence Committee is planning to publicly release Facebook advertisements purchased by Russia-linked groups during the campaign as quickly as possible, committee leaders said Wednesday.

The topic of the Russia investigations could come up when Attorney General Jeff Sessions appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee for a hearing on oversight of the Justice Department on Wednesday.

In case you missed them, here are some of our recent pieces:

Reps introduce bill to allow hacking victims to 'hack back'

Equifax takes down web page amid new breach concern

Intrigue grows with new Kaspersky revelations

GAO to probe FCC cyberattack that struck amid net neutrality debate

Trump adviser acknowledges slow pace of IT hires

Opposition mounts against bill to renew surveillance program

McCain, Cardin scold Trump for missing Russian sanctions deadline

House approves bill to bolster small business cybersecurity

Judge orders identities redacted in anti-Trump website data turnover

Election hacking report: US 'has a lot to do in a short period of time'

BORDER WALL

Mexicans See Models Of Trump's 'impenetrable' Wall, And They're Not Impressed.

By Joshua Partlow

[Washington Post](#), October 16, 2017

SAN DIEGO — The prototypes of the Trump border wall are taking shape this month in a sun-baked swath of scrubland abutting a run-down neighborhood of Tijuana. Lined up next to each other, the 30-foot-tall concrete and steel sample barriers — some with extra-stout reinforced bases, others topped with metal spikes — certainly look ominous.

The requirements established to realize President Trump's vision call for "a fence that is impenetrable, it's unscalable," said Roy Villareal, acting chief patrol agent of the San Diego border sector. "They can't dig under it. They can't cut through it."

Even these big warning slabs of concrete, the teeming construction site, and police and helicopters patrolling both sides of the border weren't enough to stop a half-dozen would-be migrants from hopping the existing fence earlier this month and landing smack in the middle of the project, according to U.S. border officials.

Maybe the fence-hoppers were unlucky, or had chosen an ill-advised, hide-in-plain-sight strategy, but either way their experience is suggestive of how many Mexicans feel about Trump's wall: no matter how it's built, it's not going to work.

"People are still going to cross no matter what is there," said Kevin Avila Rodriguez, 17, who recycles trash and lives near the spot where the border wall prototypes are being built. "This won't change things much."

Most of the Mexican reaction to these prototypes ranges from offended to blasé. Residents of Tijuana and other border cities have lived with various types of American barriers for years, and they are used to them. The existing fence here, built in the mid-1990s, is roughly 10 feet tall and made out of metal sheets from helicopter landing pads left over from the Vietnam War. A second layer of more modern steel-mesh fence, 14 to 18 feet tall, stands behind that.

Despite this seeming fortitude, the two-ply system in San Diego was "compromised" — cut

open with axes or motorized saws or blow torches — some 550 times just in the last fiscal year, according to officials from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CBP.

One irony of building these brawny prototypes at this location is San Diego has long demonstrated the weakness of walls. Nowhere is more famous for its sophisticated border tunnels than this industrial sprawl near the Otay Mesa border crossing. The drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, now imprisoned in New York, disrupted the narcotics trade by building “super-tunnels” here that were dozens of feet deep, equipped with elevators and ventilation and lighting, to move vast amounts of cocaine into California. Seven tunnels of various sizes have been identified by the San Diego sector of the Border Patrol just this year.

The ground here, as one U.S. official put it, “is like Swiss cheese.”

Trump has pledged the border wall will stop both illegal immigrants and drugs. CBP officials, however, said the walls under consideration would likely not go deep enough to block large, sophisticated tunnels.

On the second day of prototype construction, a worker for one of the companies fell backward into what CBP spokesman Ralph DeSio described as a “40-foot-deep hole,” although this was unrelated to drug tunnels, and it did not result in injuries. “It wasn’t a good first step,” he said.

Since then, construction has hummed along. By the end of last week, portions of five of the eight prototypes had been erected, deploying various formations of concrete blocks and metal rods. Each company has a 65-by-65-foot patch of ground on which to build its prototype.

The project manager asked the companies involved not to hang advertisements on their samples. They are: Caddell Construction (Montgomery, Ala.); ELTA North America (Annapolis Junction, Md.); Fisher Sand & Gravel (Tempe, Ariz.); KWR Construction (Sierra Vista, Ariz.); Texas Sterling Construction (Houston); W.G. Yates & Sons Construction (Philadelphia, Miss.).

“This is a very unique project,” said the project manager, a CBP official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly, referring to the small workspace and that they’re building side by side. “So, we have to rely on their professionalism,

good nature, and cooperation. And so far it’s been really good.”

The prototypes are being funded by the Department of Homeland Security. Trump would need congressional approval for funding before any of them could become an actual wall. Even then, CBP officials said they might not simply choose one winner but take aspects of different prototypes. Villareal, the head of the San Diego sector, said he appreciated how Trump has taken an interest in border security and hopes the wall can cut down on the 70 to 100 illegal immigrants apprehended in his sector each day.

“It’s still a very fluid border,” he said.

The project has attracted rubber-neckers but has not sparked mass protests. San Diego police had considered restricting protesters to a designated “free speech zone” near the construction site but no large crowds materialized.

The Mexican government, besides refusing to pay for the wall, has not taken a stand against it, saying such construction is the sovereign right of the United States. The faltering NAFTA trade talks are alarming top Mexican officials far more than the wall.

“For me, they should make it even taller,” said one Tijuana municipal policeman who was patrolling the border near the prototype construction site. “So the crazies, like in Las Vegas, don’t come over here. I’m serious. The danger is over there. So many assassinations happen on your side.”

Many Mexicans have called the wall an insult. Not the police officer.

“What insult is there if it’s in your country?” said the policeman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly. “What insults me is the government of Mexico, which doesn’t care about its own people. This is an insult. The money being robbed that they are not spending on schools, on science.”

Since the project abuts Tijuana, residents on the Mexican side have the best view of the construction. These neighborhoods, such as Las Torres and Nido de Las Aguilas, are poor and violent, clusters of shanties along unpaved roads. Two burned-out cars, torched within the past month, were abandoned near the fence.

Those cars were directly in front of the home of Cesar, a 60-year-old plant salesman who spoke on condition his last name not be used. He has

lived there for 23 years and can remember how so many people used to mill around waiting to cross the border illegally that "it looked a market."

The flow has slowed. He's unsure why the United States needs a new wall now.

"I think they should spend the money on something more effective," he said. "You'll always see migrants."

Other residents take greater offense at the project, which they consider a concrete monument to anti-immigrant fervor being whipped up in the United States.

"The president over there, he keeps insulting us, saying that we're the worst," said Audelia Avila Rodriguez, 21, who works in recycling and is the sister of Kevin. "This wall is just dividing families. It's very ugly. It's sad."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Fake Wedding Sting Used In Immigration Fraud Case

By Gary Craig

[Rochester \(NY\) Democrat & Chronicle](#),

October 16, 2017

On March 23, 2016, in "a village outside Rochester," a wedding took place.

There were official documents signed, photos taken, witnesses — all those precursors to a future of wedded bliss.

Oh, by the way, there were also undercover federal agents, including one posing as the town clerk conducting the wedding.

That sting operation was simply one part of a law enforcement operation that led to the arrests and convictions of four individuals who set up sham marriages to help illegal immigrants gain residence in the United States. Court records do not say where the wedding was.

Last week, the ringleader of the scam, Jamar Thomas, a 30-year-old Rochester resident, was sentenced to a year in prison. Thomas used women living in the Rochester region to marry immigrants seeking residency.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security agents used multiple individuals, working undercover, to dismantle the marriage scam, records show. The men seeking wives for immigration purposes would pay Thomas \$5,000, which Thomas would share with the supposed wives.

Thomas was out of work and struggling when he became part of the fraud, his attorney, Assistant Federal Public Defender Mark Hosken said in court papers. Someone else offered him money if he "would provide potential spouses who were American citizens," Hosken wrote.

But Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig Gestring said in court papers that Thomas instigated the scheme.

"In fact, it was Thomas who devised this scheme to sell United States Citizenship," Gestring wrote. "It was Thomas who selected and recruited the women who he would marry off for money. It was Thomas who coordinated the meetings, weddings, and each aspects of his scheme."

Thomas pleaded guilty to the fraud.

Also charged and convicted in the case were:

Khaaliqa Kegler, who was sentenced to three years probation to include six months home confinement.

Chimere Brooks, who was sentenced to two years probation.

Nadia Thomas, who is awaiting sentencing.

Authorities Make Final Arrest In Border Agent's Killing

[Associated Press](#), October 16, 2017

The U.S. Attorney's Office says authorities in Mexico have arrested the final of several defendants accused in the killing of a U.S. Border Patrol agent whose death exposed a bungled federal gun operation.

Jesus Rosario Favela-Astorga faces first-degree murder and other charges in the December 2010 killing of 40-year-old Brian Terry in Arizona.

Favela-Astorga was a member of a crew that planned on robbing marijuana smugglers when it encountered Terry and other agents who were on a stakeout in the southern Arizona desert.

The killing unveiled the Fast and Furious operation, in which federal agents allowed criminals to buy guns with the intention of tracking them to criminal organizations. But the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives lost most of the guns, including two that were found at scene of Terry's death.

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Fast And Furious Scandal: Last Remaining Fugitive In Border Agent's Murder Arrested

[Fox News](#), October 17, 2017

Mexican law enforcement officers last weekend arrested the man believed to be the final fugitive from the "rip crew" that engaged in a 2010 gunfight between Border Patrol agents that resulted in the death of agent Brian Terry.

Jesus Rosario Favela Astorga was charged Monday with first-degree murder in the killing of Terry.

"The arrest of Favela Astorga resulted from the unwavering commitment of the United States and our law enforcement partners in Mexico to bring to justice those responsible for the murder of Agent Brian Terry, who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving his country," Alana Robinson, the acting U.S. attorney, said in a statement.

Terry was killed on Dec. 14, 2010 in a gunfight between Border Patrol agents and members of a five-man cartel "rip crew," which regularly patrolled the desert north of Nogales, Ariz., looking for drug dealers to rob.

The agent's death exposed Operation Fast and Furious, a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) operation in which the federal government allowed criminals to buy guns in Phoenix-area shops with the intention of tracking them once they made their way into Mexico.

But the agency lost track of more than 1,400 of the 2,000 guns they allowed smugglers to buy. Two of those guns were found at the scene of Terry's killing.

The operation set off a political firestorm, and then-Attorney General Eric Holder was held in contempt of Congress after he refused to divulge documents for a congressional investigation.

Four members of the "rip crew" have already been sentenced to jail time in the U.S. Manuel Osorio-Arellanes was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison after pleading guilty to first-degree murder in February 2014.

In October 2015, Ivan Soto-Barraza and Jesus Sanchez-Meza were convicted by a federal jury of nine different charges, including first-degree murder and attempted armed robbery.

That same month, Rosario Rafael Burboa-Alvarez, accused of assembling the "rip crew,"

was sentenced to 27 years in prison after striking a plea agreement with prosecutors.

Authorities Make Final Arrest In Killing Of Border Agent Brian Terry

[Arizona Republic](#), October 16, 2017

Authorities in Mexico have arrested the final of seven defendants accused in the killing of a U.S. Border Patrol agent whose death exposed a bungled federal gun operation, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

Jesus Rosario Favela-Astorga was arrested Saturday without incident and faces first-degree murder and other charges in the December 2010 killing of 40-year-old Brian Terry in Arizona. The 37-year-old is the last of the defendants in the case, including five men who have either pleaded guilty or been found guilty in federal court in Tucson.

Another suspect, Heraclio Osorio-Arellanes, was arrested in Mexico in April, but a judge has yet to approve his extradition to the U.S.

Favela-Astorga was a member of a crew that planned on robbing marijuana smugglers when it encountered Terry and other agents who were on a stakeout in the southern Arizona desert, authorities said.

The killing unveiled the Fast and Furious operation, in which federal agents allowed criminals to buy guns with the intention of tracking them to criminal organizations. But the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives lost most of the guns, including two that were found at scene of Terry's death.

The operation set off political backlash against the Obama administration and led the agent's family to file a lawsuit that later was dismissed.

Terry's cousin, Robert Heyer, who chairs the Brian Terry Foundation and serves as a family spokesman, said he was gratified that Mexican and U.S. officials managed to track down the final suspect seven years after the slaying.

"I don't call it closure, but it's reassuring," Heyer said. "There was a time we thought these guys would never be brought to justice."

Heyer stressed that the case still requires extradition and prosecution, a process that could take years.

In the meantime, he said, family members remain frustrated that no one in the Justice Department has been held responsible for

Operation Fast and Furious, which allowed hundreds of guns into the hands of Mexican criminals.

"To this day, no one has been held accountable, not one person," Heyer said. "It's a travesty. ... And I'm afraid the same mistakes are going to be repeated."

Terry was in an elite Border Patrol unit staking out the southern Arizona desert for "rip-off" crew members who rob drug smugglers. The four-man team encountered a group and identified themselves as police in trying to arrest them.

But authorities say the men refused to stop, prompting an agent to fire non-lethal bean bags at them. They responded by firing from AK-47-type assault rifles. Terry was struck in the back and died shortly afterward.

Among those already serving time are Manual Osorio-Arellanes, who pleaded guilty to murder and was sentenced to 30 years in prison in 2014, and Jesus Leonel Sanchez-Meza and Ivan Soto-Barraza, who were found guilty of murder and other charges in 2015.

A man who was not present during the shooting but is charged with assembling the rip-off crew, Rosario Rafael Burboa-Alvarez, also pleaded guilty to murder.

Rito Osorio-Arellanes, who was not at the shooting, has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to interfere with commerce by robbery.

Includes material from Arizona Republic reporter Dennis Wagner.

Jurors Could Begin Weighing Charges In 'Jungle Jabbah' Warlord Trial

By Jeremy Roebuck

[Philly \(PA\)](#), October 16, 2017

A federal jury could begin deliberating as soon as Tuesday the fate of Mohammed Jabateh, the Delaware County man accused of hiding his alleged past as a Liberian warlord to gain entry into the United States.

Lawyers on both sides are expected to deliver closing arguments Tuesday morning — a day after presenting their final witnesses in the case.

In seven days of testimony, more than 15 government witnesses, many flown in from Liberia, accused Jabateh of committing unfathomable acts of violence, including rape,

murder and cannibalism, during the West African nation's first civil war between 1989 and 1996.

The bloody, multi-factioned conflict left more than 250,000 dead and generated dozens of documented reports of wartime atrocities. And yet, Jabateh is only the second person tried anywhere in the world for alleged crimes stemming from conduct during the conflict.

U.S. prosecutors charged him last year with lying on immigration forms he filed to obtain political asylum in 1997 and later permanent residency here.

The verdict could hold even greater weight in his native country where, as the government's final witness said Monday, memories of mass graves, bodies in the streets and senseless acts of violence still resonate years after the conflict.

"There was no respect for human dignity," Gregory Stemm, a Liberian photojournalist, testified. "A lot of people that suffered during the war, they are hoping ... hoping that one day justice will prevail."

Jabateh, a 51-year-old East Lansdowne father of three, has never denied his involvement with a faction of the rebel group United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO) or that he went by the nom de guerre "Jungle Jabbah" during the conflict. But he has consistently maintained that he did not commit any of the wartime acts of which he is accused.

He says he spent much of the war working security at Liberia's executive mansion for the Special Security Service (SSS), that country's equivalent of the U.S. Secret Service.

Prosecutors sought Monday to undercut that story with testimony from Stemm, who covered Liberia's executive mansion during the war.

Stemm told jurors that he first saw Jabateh in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, in 1995 — years after the atrocities the government's other witnesses described. At the time, Stemm said, Jabateh was working as a personal security guard for Alhaji G.V. Kromah, the leader of an ULIMO sect.

"As far as I'm concerned, I don't believe he was in the SSS," Stemm said.

The defense's brief presentation followed, consisting only of 10 of Jabateh's friends and family members lining up shoulder-to-shoulder in front of the jury. In sworn statements, they agreed that they knew Jabateh to be a "peaceful, law-abiding and non-violent person."

None of those defense character witnesses testified from the witness stand or offered any insight on how they came to know Jabateh or his life since arriving in the United States.

Should he be convicted, he faces up to five years in prison for each of the counts of perjury and immigration fraud with which he is charged. U.S. immigration officials have signaled they will seek to deport him no matter the outcome of the case.

Fresno Woman Pleads Guilty For ID Fraud Plan

By Brianna Calix

[Fresno \(CA\) Bee](#), October 16, 2017

A Fresno woman pleaded guilty on Monday in federal court to conspiring to sell fake identification documents for immigrants, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert reported.

Maria Victoria Perez-Vasquez, 32, was part of a scheme with five others to sell fake ID documents, including Social Security cards and registration receipt cards for undocumented immigrants, between June 2015 and June 2016. Customers who placed orders paid up to \$150 for a set of the fake documents, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

On June 16, 2016, Perez-Vasquez and five others were arrested for their scheme. Four of the co-defendants pleaded guilty and have been sentenced. One co-defendant failed to appear in court.

The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security and the California DMV.

SECRET SERVICE

Who Is Visiting Trump At Mar-A-Lago? We Should Be Told

By Leora Smith

[Newsweek](#), October 16, 2017

In response to a lawsuit filed by the nonprofit Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, or CREW, seeking to make the records public, Department of Justice lawyers insisted "the Secret Service does not maintain any 'visitor logs' at Mar-a-Lago."

But seven Mar-a-Lago members and their guests told ProPublica that uniformed officers, who appear to be Secret Service, stand at the doors of the resort on weekends when the

president is there, and hold lists of people approved for access.

Anne Weisman, CREW's attorney on the case, said the visitor lists, whether they are compiled by Trump Organization employees or the federal government, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and should be made public.

Several Mar-a-Lago members and guests said security checked their names against lists if they entered the club on weekends when Trump was present. When Lynn Aronberg, who runs a public relations firm in West Palm Beach, visited the resort this year during one of the president's visits, she had to provide her driver's license to officers at the door.

While she is not certain the officers were Secret Service agents, Aronberg said they were dressed very differently from the police officers she is used to seeing around Palm Beach. The officers held a clipboard, and checked her name against what looked to her like a list of names attached to it.

Other visitors remember officers holding a clipboard at the door. Boca Raton resident Heidi Klein has visited Mar-a-Lago "probably 10 times" as a member's guest or for charity events. She also said the officers looked at a list before allowing her through, and that they always check guests' names.

Phil Nicozisis, a Mar-a-Lago member who runs his own real estate development company, says that every time he brings a guest to the Palm Beach club, he has to email the club and provide the visitor's full name. (This was true before Trump's inauguration but Mar-a-Lago is now stricter about the rule.)

Members are told of the president's visits in advance, Nicozisis said, so that they can prepare for the heightened security and scrutiny of those entering.

The Secret Service and Department of Justice declined to comment on the Mar-a-Lago visitor lists, citing the ongoing lawsuit with CREW. The Trump Organization did not respond to ProPublica requests for comment.

Former Secret Service officials and other experts say it's exceedingly unlikely that the government does not know who is getting close to the president. In addition to keeping track of people coming into the club, the Secret Service also regularly conducts criminal background

checks on any guests or staff members who will spend more than a passing moment in physical proximity to the president.

This protocol applies at Mar-a-Lago in the same way it does everywhere else the president goes.

"It makes zero sense to me that they would have no records related to [protective intelligence] name checks or background checks at Mar-a-Lago," said Jonathan Wackrow, who served on the Secret Service's presidential protection detail for 14 years. "You would never want to be surprised."

Watchdog groups and journalists have tried to find out who has had audiences with Trump at the place he's dubbed the "Winter White House." Advocates contend the public has a right to know who has access to the president, especially since it can be bought for \$200,000 a year, the current price of a Mar-a-Lago membership. This money flows into the Trump Organization, enriching the president.

Kathleen Clark, a law professor at Washington University Law School who writes and teaches about government ethics, says the list of presidential visitors at Mar-a-Lago would give the public necessary information.

"The president is enriching himself, probably at the expense of the country, because he's inducing people to pay him and his companies so they can have access," Clark said.

Trump has spent 25 days of his presidency at Mar-a-Lago. The Secret Service recently told the court that the division responsible for conducting background checks did not have any records related to presidential visitors between Trump's inauguration and March 8.

During that span, Trump visited Mar-a-Lago three times and was spotted at a 500-person cancer fundraiser sitting next to former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Boston financier and club member Howard Kessler, along with their spouses.

Trump has known Kessler for years and Mulroney is a former head of state. It's unclear if they avoided a background check by the Secret Service or if their background checks simply went undisclosed in the administration's legal response.

In response to the CREW lawsuit, the government only disclosed the names of 22 people they considered to be presidential visitors. All 22 were government, diplomatic or support

staff who went to Mar-a-Lago as part of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's delegation in February.

The federal judge in the case, Katherine Failla, also expressed "surprise" at the minimal visitor records handed over, but declined CREW's motion to sanction the government.

During President Obama's two terms, the White House released its visitor lists, with some national security exemptions, as part of a settlement of lawsuits seeking the records. Media pool reports would sometimes fill the gaps, namely on presidential trips to Camp David; flights aboard Air Force One; and vacations to Martha's Vineyard.

Previous administrations, including those of Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, refused to voluntarily disclose presidential visitor lists altogether. Over eight years, Bush spent roughly 490 days at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, which he called the "Western White House," and guests included former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, former Chinese President Jiang Zemin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Such visits were typically made public through the media pool reports.

But the differences between previous presidential vacation spots and Trump's are stark.

"Mar-a-Lago is a commercial establishment," Clark said. "There was no indication that President Bush was charging any of the people who visited his ranch. It was not a commercial relationship, and he was not enriching himself, so there was not the same kind of public interest in knowing who was paying for access."

Have any more ideas on how to help us find lists of people with access to Mar-a-Lago and President Trump? Send an email to leora.smith@propublica.org.

Secret Service Officer Arrests Man Who Tried To Carjack Tour Bus

[WRC-TV Washington](#), October 16, 2017

A uniformed Secret Service officer patrols outside the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue with a member of the canine team on September 23, 2014 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

A uniformed U.S. Secret Service officer arrested a man who allegedly tried to carjack a Big Bus tour bus near Lafayette Square on Sunday night.