

furia nos golpeó de una manera tan violenta que nos deja en ascuas de cara a nuestro futuro.

Definitivamente, ni nosotros, ni nadie, podía estar 100% preparado para un desastre de esta magnitud.

Las acciones del gobierno previas al paso del huracán fueron puntuales para evitar mayor cantidad de muertes.

Las autoridades locales movieron sus limitados recursos bastante rápido luego del paso del fenómeno atmosférico y lograron abrir accesos en una buena parte de la Isla.

Pero la respuesta de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA) y de otras instituciones federales desafortunadamente no fue, ni es, tan rápida como se necesitaba.

Entendemos que ser una isla complica mucho el panorama, pero no justifica la dilación en las entregas de suministros, como agua y alimentos, y tampoco en la entrega de los famosos toldos azules para proteger las casas que perdieron sus techos.

No nos malinterpreten; agradecemos la ayuda de FEMA y otras agencias federales, pero debe acelerarse el proceso, sobre todo en la montaña.

Aunque vivimos una era digital, en que las comunicaciones son más rápidas y el Internet se convierte en un aliado para apoyar las soluciones, no nos sirve de nada cuando no hay energía eléctrica, y parte del proceso burocrático para coordinar las ayudas ha descansado en la herramienta digital, probablemente convirtiendo el proceso en uno más lento.

Ya han pasado dos semanas y al día de ayer teníamos muchos signos positivos.

El Aeropuerto Internacional Luis Muñoz Marín está abierto en un 100%, lo que facilitará el movimiento de pasajeros varados aquí, la llegada de más personal de apoyo y el reencuentro de familias.

Las estaciones de gasolina continúan operando con bastante normalidad y, al día de ayer, casi 900 de estos establecimientos estaban abiertos.

Hay 64 hospitales en funciones y ya 25 de ellos están operando con energía suplida por la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE).

En cuanto a los bancos, las sucursales abiertas superaban las 175 y los cajeros automáticos o ATM están operando en un 79%.

El agua del sistema de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AAA) continúa

fluyendo a buen ritmo desde hace días, alcanzando ya el 55% de la Isla.

Las señales celulares también reportan una mejoría significativa, alcanzando ya en la Isla un 45% de los clientes.

Desafortunadamente, la energía eléctrica todavía sigue siendo el talón de Aquiles del proceso de recuperación, pero debemos recordar que el sistema ya se encontraba frágil antes de María. Casi un 10% de los clientes de la AEE está recibiendo electricidad.

Todo esto lo vemos como señales positivas que deben empezar a generar más esperanza en la ruta hacia la nueva normalidad.

El presidente Donald Trump estuvo en visita oficial de cuatro horas en Puerto Rico y pudo comprobar que realmente somos una zona de desastre. Mientras él cumplía con sus compromisos, su equipo se reunió con el gobernador y tuvieron la oportunidad de discutir en profundidad la crisis energética.

La visita programada durante el día de hoy del vicepresidente de Estados Unidos, Mike Pence, puede ser quizás un indicio de que, aparte de los \$29,000 millones solicitados para los afectados por los huracanes Irma, María y Harvey en distintas jurisdicciones, puedan recibirse otras ayudas y más apoyo del gobierno federal.

Y realmente necesitamos que sea revisada la situación de Puerto Rico porque, de acuerdo con los estimados preliminares, entre los daños directos y el impacto en la actividad económica, de una forma u otra las pérdidas ascienden a más de \$95,000 millones.

La mejoría es lenta, pero constante, y por ello debemos mirar el futuro con esperanza.

Lo que sí tiene que cambiar radicalmente es el apoyo a las comunidades más impactadas, sobre todo las de la zona montañosa.

Hacemos un llamado a los directivos de FEMA para que agilicen la entrega de agua, provisiones y toldos a esta parte de la población.

A quince días del impacto de María podríamos estar mejor, sin lugar a dudas, si los recursos se asignan y manejan con mayor prontitud.

También ayudaría mucho a que estemos mejor si todos, como ciudadanos, ejercemos la paciencia y elevamos la vara de la tolerancia en medio de una de las crisis económicas y sociales más difíciles de nuestra historia.

Aumentan A 36 Los Boricuas Muertos Tras El Paso De "María"

[La Opinión \(CA\)](#), October 6, 2017

El gobernador de Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, informó que el número de fallecidos a causa del paso del huracán "María" se elevó a 36.

"El número de muertes directas o indirectas adjudicadas a la tormenta sube de 34 a 36. Hubo dos muertes adicionales confirmadas, una en Patillas por caída de escombros, y una en San Germán, por caída de un árbol luego del evento a una persona", indicó, según el periódico local El Nuevo Día, el primer ejecutivo durante la conferencia de prensa que ofrece diario para brindar reportes actualizados.

Hay actualmente 10 mil funcionarios del Departamento de Defensa trabajando sobre el terreno y más de 500 más de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (Fema por sus siglas en inglés).

Además, alertó de que la situación en la represa de Guajacata, en el área oeste, es crítica, por lo que pidió a la población que esté atenta a desalojos.

Al respecto, mencionó que el Cuerpo de Ingenieros y el Departamento de Defensa de Estados Unidos laboran para montar barreras de concreto para mitigar cualquier emergencia.

Recalcó que esa iniciativa busca prevenir el impacto que pudieran tener las lluvias que se esperan en la zona noroeste los próximos días.

En cuanto a las ayudas inmediatas del Gobierno federal destinadas a daños, insistió que espera que las aporte en su totalidad Washington o que el Ejecutivo de la isla únicamente pague un 10 por ciento del total.

Está previsto que hoy se firme una orden ejecutiva para permitir que médicos de la Guardia Nacional y otros que actúan como voluntarios puedan ejercer su actividad de forma completamente legal, sin tener que pasar por los pasos administrativos que son requeridos por ley.

Rosselló resaltó que aprovechará la visita que realiza este viernes a la isla el vicepresidente de Estados Unidos, Michael Pence, para pedirle que la ayuda federal sea la que precisa Puerto Rico para su recuperación.

"Pence ha sido un campeón de Puerto Rico", dijo Rosselló, que adelantó que solicitará al número dos de la Casa Blanca que "sea el líder en el Senado para que el paquete de ayudas se haga de igual forma que a los estados" de Estados Unidos.

Subrayó que otra de las peticiones a Pence es la de que favorezca que la isla disponga de flexibilidad desde el punto de vista financiero dada su situación actual.

"Quiero que (Pence) experimente la destrucción masiva y que comprenda que es el daño más grave que ha sufrido Puerto Rico en su historia", expresó Rosselló, tras resaltar que se tiene que considerar que los boricuas son ciudadanos de EU, por lo que merecen un tratamiento sin discriminación.

Incluso, varios boricuas han dicho que el recorrido que debe hacer el vicepresidente es el siguiente:

No vaya a San Juan. Vaya al interior, donde yo vivo", le dijo Evelinda Burgos a Pence, quien iba acompañado por su esposa Karen Pence.

A su llegada al aeropuerto de Orlando, el vicepresidente se reunió con un grupo de personas que acababan de arribar y estaban siendo atendidos por organismos de asistencia.

El vicepresidente fue de mesa en mesa y habló con los recién llegados, incluida Burgos, de la localidad de Naranjito.

Esta puertorriqueña afirmó que el presidente Donald Trump había visitado otra parte, no el centro" durante su viaje del martes a la isla devastada por el huracán.

Pence prometió ayudar y le aseguró a Burgos que podría volver a su casa.

"No hay nada como la casa de uno", expresó.

"¿Te puedo abrazar?", agregó el vicepresidente y los dos se abrazaron.

La Superintendente Evalúa Si Los Policías Van A Cobrar Horas Extra

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 9, 2017

La superintendente de la Policía, Michelle Hernández de Fraley, aseguró hoy, lunes, que todavía se encuentra evaluando si legalmente a los oficiales desde los rangos de teniente II a coronel le corresponde el pago de las horas extra trabajadas durante el paso de los huracanes Irma y María por la isla durante septiembre.

En caso de que se compruebe que los oficiales son elegibles para recibir ese pago, adelantó que tendrán que evidenciar que durante la emergencia estuvieron realizando labores operacionales relacionadas con los fenómenos atmosféricos como parte del proceso de evaluación de los horarios de las horas extra trabajadas.

Estos servidores públicos estuvieron laborando en turnos de 12 horas y sin días libres.

El jueves de la semana pasada, el presidente del Frente Unido de Policías, Diego Figueroa, le había solicitado al secretario del Departamento de Seguridad Pública (DSP), Héctor M. Pesquera, que clarificara si estos oficiales cobrarían las horas extras trabajadas o tendrían que donar su tiempo.

Recordó que durante las emergencias ocasionadas por los huracanes Hugo en el 1989 y Georges en el 1998, todos los oficiales recibieron el pago de las horas extra los cuales se les factura a la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, en inglés).

De su lado, Hernández de Fraley repitió que se comenzó el proceso de pago de horas extra a los policías y sargentos que trabajaron durante la emergencia del huracán Irma, tras recibir una asignación de \$1.3 millones en partidas estatales y federales.

“Ya tenemos aprobada esa asignación adelantada de fondos y que estamos trabajando en ella lo más ágil posible para que nuestros policías puedan recibir sus pagos. Hemos trabajado intensamente y sin parar desde el primer evento atmosférico que nos impactó, el huracán Irma, y ahora continuamos durante la emergencia del huracán María. Los miembros de la Uniformada han tenido largas jornadas de 12 horas y es justo que puedan recibir la compensación monetaria que les corresponde”, expresó la superintendente.

Del total de \$1.3 millones, \$975,000 fueron asignados de fondos federales y los otros \$325,000 provienen del pareo de fondos del gobierno.

Sobre las horas extras trabajadas durante el huracán María, adelantó que ya se solicitaron los fondos de las primeras dos semanas para el pago a los agentes y sargentos.

FEMA Habilita En Florida Una Nueva Sucursal Para La Gestión De Asistencia Federal

By Jorge Morales Almada
[Univision](#), October 9, 2017

Casi un mes después del paso del huracán Irma, muchos residentes de Florida que aún no han comenzado un proceso con la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias podrán ir al condado de Broward para darle inicio.

Muchos residentes de Florida aún no han podido gestionar la asistencia federal luego del paso del huracán Irma por la lejanía de los centros habilitados. Por eso, la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, por sus siglas en inglés) abrió un centro de recuperación de desastres en el condado de Broward para todos los afectados del sur de la Florida.

La oficina, que operará todos los días de 8:00 am a 8:00 pm, está ubicada en el Atrium West, 7771 West Oakland Park Boulevard en Sunrise.

Por el momento, FEMA ha habilitado tres edificios para comenzar este tipo de procesos: Edificio K del campus Kendall del Miami Dade College, 225 NW 12th Ave en Boynton Beach y 81850 Overseas Hwy en Islamorada.

Los equipos de limpieza comenzaron a trabajar en Key Biscayne, Florida, el día después de que Irma pasó. Los contratistas de desechos están trabajando desde el amanecer hasta el atardecer, siete días a la semana para despejar las calles.

FEMA Abre Centro De Desastre En Broward

By Johanna A. Álvarez
[El Nuevo Herald \(FL\)](#), October 9, 2017

Si todavía no ha podido tramitar la asistencia federal tras el huracán Irma, la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, por sus siglas en inglés) le tiene una buena noticia.

La agencia federal abrió este lunes un nuevo centro de recuperación de desastres en el condado Broward para todos los afectados del sur de la Florida que quieran solicitar la ayuda o tengan alguna pregunta.

El centro está ubicado en el Atrium West, 7771 West Oakland Park Boulevard en Sunrise.

Esta oficina estará abierta todos los días de 8 de la mañana a 8 de la tarde hasta nuevo aviso.

Tras el paso del huracán Irma, el gobierno de la Florida y FEMA han abierto varios centros de recuperación de desastres en el sur del estado para darle asistencia personalizada y cara a cara a los afectados.

De acuerdo a su portal online, hay otros tres centros actualmente abiertos para el público: Edificio K del campus Kendall del Miami Dade College, 225 NW 12th Ave en Boynton Beach y 81850 Overseas Hwy en Islamorada.

Si va a ir a uno de los centros, se le recomienda que se registre previamente. Lo

puede hacer a través de la página DisasterAssistance.gov, de la aplicación móvil de FEMA, o llamando de 7 a.m. a 11 p.m. al número de atención 1-800-621-3362.

Para registrar, necesitará información personal como sus pólizas de seguro, el número del Seguro Social, número de teléfono, dirección de correo y la dirección y el código postal de la propiedad dañada.

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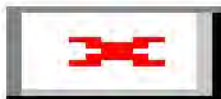
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Sent: Monday, October 16, 2017 6:50 PM
Cc: Arroyo, Maria <Maria.Arroyo@fema.dhs.gov>; Just, Miriam <Miriam.Just@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: DR 4339 PR Evening Media Analysis Report 10/16/17

Good evening,

Attached and below is the DR-4339-PR Evening Media Analysis report for Monday, October 16, 2017.

Maria: Please distribute all hands.

Thank you



Media Analysis Report

Puerto Rico - Hurricanes Irma/Maria

DR-4336/4339-PR

Monday, October 16, 2017, Evening Edition

Hot Issues:

- *Following morning report by CNN, AP and Washington Post also report on potentially dangerous water at Dorado and other pollution hazards*
- *Related, president said today military "shouldn't have to be" distributing water, food*

News Clips Analysis / Trends:

- Safe and unsafe drinking water or "environmental crisis" is the overwhelming news trend today, starting with CNN report this morning on residents drinking from polluted source (see AM clips edition), and followed by AP and Washington Post similar stories during the day. The stories heavily reference EPA, and don't mention **FEMA**
- News coverage blew up this afternoon after the president's remarks about how the military "shouldn't have to be" distributing food and water because he believes the local officials should be in charge of it

Survivor News and Quotes:

- "So I would love to stay, and I wanna stay, at least for...I feel like this: I need to help, and I need to be part of this rebuilding. But at the same time, like professionally, it's going to be like devastating like for my career staying here. It's gonna be terrible because it's gonna be one, two years of doing absolutely nothing with my career. So I would have to rethink myself and do something else. I have no problem with it, but, you know, it's a decision I have to make."— Gabriel Rodriguez, production and creative director at an advertising agency, San Juan resident -- *on Public Radio International*

News Clips Highlights/Summary:

- AP and Washington Post have stories today similar to the CNN report this morning about Puerto Ricans drinking potentially dangerous water. "Residents unwittingly drawing water from a Superfund site is merely one example of Puerto Rico's dire lack of clean, reliable water," the Post reports.
- Spanish – Police monitor access to contaminated well
- President Trump said in the Rose Garden today that local officials should be in charge of distributing food and water, not the military
- Spanish - Today's rains caused multiple bridges to be washed out and there have been landslides reported; families cut off
- Public Radio International talks to a handful of Puerto Ricans about their intent to stay and rebuild their lives and communities
- Spanish - Over 5,000 people who lost their homes and now live in temporary shelters throughout the island.

- More coverage of the solar industry's possible role in restoring electrical power to Puerto Rico
- Bacterial infections are a danger and basic medical supplies such as insulin are lacking, Healthline reports
- Spanish - Doctors and employees of the San Juan Municipal Hospital asked the s mayor to reopen the emergency room
- Spanish - Officials again publish the names of 113 missing persons last seen as Maria struck
- Half of PR banks are open
- Hurricane refugees from Puerto Rico and other locations who have fled to New York City will have a central office to get help
- Students from Puerto Rico are now being schooled in many locations on the mainland
- Spanish - University Of Puerto Rico reports the institution's damage over \$100 million but that the students will be able to complete their academic courses.
- **Social Media Summary:** People continue to use social media to locate loved ones, learn about utility restoration – many doubt validity of media and public official reports. In **FEMA**-related conversation, the public is pleased with information about supplies being distributed and help available, but they are not sure what the \$500 they've received is for, and there is criticism for the types of food some have received from **FEMA**. People are especially interested in the USNS Comfort – they're happy about the newborn delivered yesterday, and want to know how to obtain medical services. Efforts are underway to get students back to school and the reactions are mixed. Coast Guard and National Guard recovery efforts are especially appreciated.

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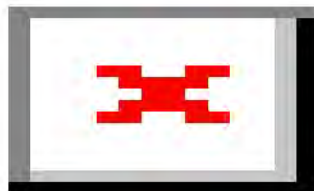
WATER / POLLUTION

Puerto Rico struggles with massive environmental crisis (AP)

Michael Melia

Updated 10:25 am, Monday, October 16, 2017

[Associated Press](#)



In this Saturday, Oct. 14 2017 photo, people affected by Hurricane Maria collect water and while others bathe in water piped from a mountain creek, in Utuado, Puerto Rico. AP

CAGUAS, Puerto Rico (AP) — Raw sewage is pouring into the rivers and reservoirs of Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. People without running water bathe and wash their clothes in contaminated streams, and some islanders have been drinking water from condemned wells.

Nearly a month after the hurricane made landfall, Puerto Rico is only beginning to come to grips with a massive environmental emergency that has no clear end in sight.

"I think this will be the most challenging environmental response after a hurricane that our country has ever seen," said Judith Enck, who served as administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency region that includes Puerto Rico under President Barack Obama.

With hundreds of thousands of people still without running water, and 20 of the island's 51 sewage treatment plants out of service, there are growing concerns about contamination and disease.

"People in the U.S. can't comprehend the scale and scope of what's needed," said Drew Koslow, an ecologist with the nonprofit Ridge to Reefs who recently spent a week in Puerto Rico working with a portable water treatment system.

EPA officials said that of last week they still had not been unable to inspect five of the island's 18 Superfund sites — highly contaminated toxic sites targeted for cleanup because of risks to human health and the environment — including the former U.S. Navy bombing range on the island of Vieques.

"I just wish we had more resources to deal with it," said Catherine McCabe, the EPA deputy regional administrator.

Puerto Rico has a long history of industrial pollution, and environmental problems have worsened due to neglect during a decade-long economic crisis. A dozen over-packed landfills remain open despite EPA orders to close them because local governments say they don't have the money.

With homes damaged or destroyed, power lines obliterated and traffic chaotic, many of the EPA's own island-based personnel were unable to report for work immediately after the hurricane tore across the island on Sept. 20.

Twelve days after Maria made landfall, the EPA said it had 45 people in Puerto Rico. By Sunday that number stood at 85 — a force that Enck said was still insufficient.

Less than 20 percent of the island's power grid was back online, and while hundreds of large generators have been brought in, the U.S. territory's out-of-service sewage treatments plants include several that sit upstream of drinking water supplies.

One of Puerto Rico's biggest treatment plants discharges into a river that feeds Lake Carraizo, a reservoir that provides drinking water for half of the metropolitan San Juan area. Several of the plant's pumping stations remain out of service due to lack of diesel for generators, leaving sewage running into the lake.

"We're not going anywhere near it," resident Edwin Felix, 46, said, nodding toward the greenish brown river coursing past his hillside home.

That puts an extra strain on the filtration plants that give a final treatment to the water reaching the capital.

Officials say running water has been restored to 72 percent of the island's people. The water authority says it's safe to drink, though the health department still recommends boiling or disinfecting it.

In the town of Juncos on Thursday, EPA personnel warned people who were swimming in a river by an overflowing manhole that it was contaminated by sewage because a pumping station had failed, said Jaime Geliga, chief of the agency's local municipal water program branch.

"That's the only water they get," he said. "That's the difficult part."

Even the island's own water authority has distributed water from some wells at the Dorado Superfund site, according to Gov. Ricardo Rossello, who said that water has been tested and complies with all federal health standards.

But the EPA said Sunday that some people have ignored fences and warning signs and have taken water for drinking from wells on other, more dangerous parts of Dorado, which was brought into the Superfund program due to dangerous levels of industrial chemicals in groundwater.

The agency put up new fences over the weekend and said it had taken samples from those wells, though the results of tests were not yet available.

Islanders also have been urged to avoid drinking or touching surface waters such as lakes or rivers, particularly after a deadly outbreak of suspected leptospirosis, a bacterial disease spread by animals' urine.

The EPA said it plans to dedicate more staff this week to inspect the roughly 250 small water utilities that serve remote, isolated communities and are typically in poor repair.

Many Puerto Ricans fear other existing threats could have grown worse.

In the southern coastal city of Guayama, residents long have protested the dumping of a several-story-high mountain of coal ash on the grounds of nearby power plant. The pile looks intact after the hurricane, but many fear the winds and flooding could have sent coal ash laced with heavy metals into adjacent neighborhoods.

Benjamin Planes Lugo, 70, lost the roof of the house he built with savings from running a gas station in New York, but he said he's more concerned about the ash, which he already blamed for his respiratory problems. The EPA said Sunday that it had visited the site and was awaiting test results.

"We're real worried about it," Planes Lugo said.

Enck, the former EPA administrator who also oversaw the cleanup after Superstorm Sandy in New York and New Jersey, said her successors should pull in staff from all over the country to address Puerto Rico's problems.

"They have to inspect every single landfill," she said. "EPA needs to go and look at how much material has moved offsite because, inevitably, it did."

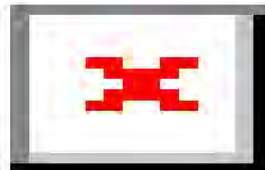
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Desperate Puerto Ricans line up for water — at a hazardous waste site (Washington Post)

By [Arelis R. Hernández](#) and [Brady Dennis](#)

October 16 at 2:13 PM

[Washington Post](#)



<https://img.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2017/10/Puerto-Rico-2-300x169.jpg>

A man draws water from a well in Puerto Rico that is part of a Superfund site. The area was not secured when federal officials arrived over the weekend to test the water quality of several wells there. Right, workers reattach the fallen "Peligro" sign, for danger, at the Maguayo well in Dorado, where locals who still lack water service after Hurricane Maria were filling containers with potentially contaminated water. (Arelis R. Hernandez/The Washington Post)

DORADO, Puerto Rico — Every 10 minutes or so, a truck or a van pulled up to the exposed spigot of an overgrown well, known as Maguayo #4, that sits not far from a bustling expressway and around the corner from a Krispy Kreme doughnut shop.

Fencing around the area had been torn open, and a red and white "Peligro" sign, warning of danger, lay hidden beneath debris and dense vegetation. One after another, people attached a hose to

draw water for bathing, washing dishes and, in some cases, drinking. They filled buckets, jugs, soda bottles.

What many didn't realize is that the well is one of nearly a dozen that are part of the Dorado Groundwater Contamination Superfund site — designated last year by the Environmental Protection Agency as among the nation's most toxic sites.

Past testing here has shown the presence of tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene, solvents commonly used in industrial processes, which can cause health problems including liver damage and increased risk of cancer. The EPA has yet to identify the cause of groundwater contamination in the wells, and local water systems no longer draw from them.

But the aftermath of Hurricane Maria has brought desperation in many forms. In this corner of the island, many residents still have no reliable source of water and search for access wherever they can.

It's difficult to know just how many people have sought water from the Superfund site in the weeks since the Category 4 hurricane walloped Puerto Rico and crippled its infrastructure. The central water authority continues to depend on generators and some limited electricity-grid power to keep pumps working at plants across the island. As of Sunday, the government announced it had restored service to nearly 70 percent of customers.

But for the families who live in Dorado, nothing is yet flowing in their homes. In a single hour on Saturday, more than four families arrived at the unsecured Maguayo well to draw water. None was aware of the potential dangers. Several assumed the well was part of the "Supertubo" that carries water to greater San Juan, roughly 20 miles to the east.

In the late morning, EPA officials arrived on the scene just as a man and two children were topping off a 50-gallon container on the back of his pickup. Andres, who declined to give his last name, said he had been using the water for bathing and had no idea it might be contaminated.

The dozen officials, armed with kits, gloves and other materials to conduct tests, hastily reassembled the broken chain-link fence near the spigot and restored the "Danger" sign.

Recent local testing showed that contamination levels were below legal thresholds, but EPA spokesman Elias Rodriguez said the agency remains concerned about any residents drinking from wells that are part of the site. Officials said Sunday that data gathered in 2015 showed some wells were contaminated — exceeding standards for volatile organic chemicals — while others met drinking-water standards. The entire area was included in the Superfund site boundaries as a "precautionary measure" because groundwater contamination can move over time, the EPA said.

An agency statement said that the results of the bacteria portion of its testing should be available by midweek and that its chemical analysis should be completed by the end of next week.

Residents unwittingly drawing water from a Superfund site is merely one example of Puerto Rico's dire lack of clean, reliable water. Government officials have said it could be months before power is fully restored across the island, which means that it could take nearly as long to get water flowing to all residents in need. National Guard troops and aid workers only recently began reaching the most far-flung communities with bottled water and water trucks.

The massive disruptions have forced residents to forgo the basics of modern plumbing and resort to any means available to fill containers. Along Highway 10, which cuts a jagged north-south route through the center of Puerto Rico, vehicles frequently line the road shoulders as drivers search for spring water flowing from craggy mountainsides.

In the mountainous municipality of Comerio, flooding from the hurricane left residents cut off from the central government and outside aid. So locals used plastic pipes to install a crude system to reroute spring water to a clearing where, one by one, people could shower. Elsewhere, residents have slogged regularly to creeks to fetch water and to bathe.

EPA officials prepare to test water from a well located on the Dorado Superfund site. Locals have been drawing water from a well there for weeks, not knowing it could be contaminated. (Arelis R. Hernandez/The Washington Post)

With the lack of reliable water has come increasing fear of disease.

Already, the island government has identified four suspected deaths as a result of leptospirosis, a bacterial infection spread by animal urine in the soil or groundwater. The deaths won't be certified as "hurricane-related" unless the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms lab samples indicating the victims became infected by drinking or having contact with contaminated water.

The health risks posed by water from the Maguayo well probably depend on the person, Rodriguez said. Any hazards might be more risky for vulnerable populations, such as elderly people or pregnant women.

[['If there is no water, disease will come': Many in Puerto Rico still lack water service](#)]

Another EPA spokesman, Rusty Harris-Bishop, said government officials only recently learned that people were trying to get water at Superfund sites. In one case, a local resident contacted the agency to request access to a well.

Harris-Bishop said the EPA began sending assessment teams late last week to evaluate hazardous waste sites in Dorado, Hormigas and San German. After surveying those locations and two others, the agency says it believes residents were able to access wells only at the Dorado site, although officials acknowledge they have no way of knowing how many people carted away water before the site was again secured Saturday.

The EPA is working with the Federal Emergency Management Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure water trucks are reaching nearby neighborhoods. "We are sensitive to the suffering and needs of these communities," Harris-Bishop said.

Dennis reported from Washington.

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Policía dará vigilancia a supuesto pozo contaminado en Dorado | Hospital (Metro PR)

[Cybernews](#)

lunes 16 de octubre del 2017, a las 13:38

Police will monitor well number 4 of the Aqueducts and Sewers Authority (AAA) in Macoolo, Dorado, which is supposedly contaminated.

La Policía le dará vigilancia al pozo número 4 de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AAA) en Maguayo, Dorado, el cual supuestamente está contaminado.

Según el reporte, una persona abrió la llave y varios ciudadanos se llevaron a sus casas el agua supuestamente contaminada.

El pozo en cuestión ubica en la carretera PR-694 kilómetro 2.3 del barrio Maguayo en Dorado.

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Trump says military should not have to help with food, water distribution in Puerto Rico (CNBC)

- The military is helping distribute water and food in Puerto Rico, but President Trump says that's "something that really they shouldn't have to be doing."
- The U.S. territory has been reeling in the wake of Hurricane Maria, which left most of the island without power or access to clean drinking water.
- Trump has faced criticism for an apparent lack of empathy amid the disaster response.

By [Christine Wang](#)

3:52 p.m. Oct. 16, 2017

[CNBC](#)

President [Donald Trump](#) said the military shouldn't have to distribute the "massive amounts" of food and water that have been delivered to storm-battered Puerto Rico.

When a reporter asked Trump about disaster relief on the island, the president said that food and water had been brought to Puerto Rico, but it wasn't being distributed by local people.

"They have to distribute the food to the people of the island. So, what we've done is, we now actually have military distributing food, something that really they shouldn't have to be doing," he said in a [wide-ranging, hastily scheduled press conference](#) on Monday.

The remark follows comments Trump made last week, where he partly blamed the island for the devastation and said emergency responders can't stay in Puerto Rico "forever."

Puerto Rico has been reeling in the wake of Hurricane Maria, which left most of the U.S. territory without power or access to clean drinking water. Over the weekend, local authorities raised the death toll to 48 after reviewing medical records.

A local economist projected that the wreckage may have set back Puerto Rico's economy so much that it will now take [more than a decade to recover](#).

Trump said Monday that aid operations in Puerto Rico are "very tough" because the island "was in very poor shape before the hurricanes ever hit." The island had more than \$70 million in debt before Maria landed.

The president has faced criticism for an apparent lack of empathy for Puerto Rico amid the disaster response.

During a trip to the island earlier this month, Trump said the hurricane destruction had thrown his administration's budget "[a little out of whack](#)." Later that day, he tossed packages of paper towels to hurricane victims.

While Trump has said his administration has done a great job responding to the crisis on the island, a [recent poll found that most voters disagreed](#). Fifty-five percent of American voters say the Trump administration has not done enough to help the U.S. territory after Hurricane Maria struck, [according to a Quinnipiac poll released last week](#).

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Trump blames difficulty accessing water in Puerto Rico on local distribution (CNN)

US has brought 'tremendous amounts of water'

By Eli Watkins , CNN

Posted: 2:23 PM, October 16, 2017 Updated: 2:35 PM, October 16, 2017

[CNN](#)

Puerto Rico is suffering shortages of water in many areas and only 15 percent of grid electricity has been restored.

WASHINGTON (CNN) - President Donald Trump defended the federal government's response to the disaster in Puerto Rico, and contended difficulty accessing food and water was due to shortcomings on local distribution.

"We have delivered tremendous amounts of water, and then what you have to do is you have to have distribution of the water by the people on the island," Trump said at a news conference on Monday from the White House.

Trump noted the military is on the ground helping with distribution efforts -- which he argued shouldn't be their job.

"What we've done is we now actually have military distributing food, something that really they shouldn't have to be doing," Trump said.

He said there are plenty of supplies in Puerto Rico, but the local distribution chains need to work to get them where they are needed.

"We have massive amounts of water," Trump said. "We have massive amounts of food, but they have to distribute the food, and they have to do this. They have to distribute the food to the people of the island."

Trump said the situation was "very tough" because Puerto Rico is an island and had a poor electrical grid prior to being hit by back-to-back hurricanes.

"It was in really bad shape before," Trump said.

The entire island of Puerto Rico was walloped by hurricanes last month, and the population of more than 3 million U.S. citizens continues to struggle with the fallout. The House passed a package of relief funding last week, but much of the island remains without power -- and access to clean water continues to be lacking.

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Trump: Military 'shouldn't have to be' distributing food in Puerto Rico (Politico)

By [Cristiano Lima](#)

10/16/2017 03:39 PM EDT

[Politico](#)

More on this:

- **Transcript of president's statements on various topics, including Puerto Rico at [TIME.com](#)**
- **Key Moments from President's Wide Ranging News Conference, [ABC.com](#)**
- **Also no [FOX News](#) and [PBS](#)**

President Donald Trump said military personnel assisting in Hurricane Maria recovery efforts "shouldn't have to be" distributing food in Puerto Rico, again casting the U.S. territory's challenges as partially self-inflicted during a Monday press conference.

The president said that while federal agencies have provided "massive" amounts of food and water to Puerto Rico — where access to resources and power remains severely hampered by last month's storm — they should not also be expected to distribute them. Trump has [previously said](#) Puerto Ricans relied too much on federal government resources instead of a "community effort" to rebuild.

"We have massive amounts of water. We have massive amounts of food," Trump said at the White House, where he spoke alongside Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. "But they have to distribute the food."

Trump added: "We now actually have military distributing food — something that, really, they shouldn't have to be doing."

The president has singled out issues with infrastructure and other challenges in Puerto Rico that he said pre-dated the storm as hurdles in the path to recovery. He has also warned that he won't leave federal employees in Puerto Rico indefinitely.

"We cannot keep **FEMA**, the Military & the First Responders, who have been amazing (under the most difficult circumstances) in P.R. forever!" he [tweeted](#).

The House of Representatives on Thursday [overwhelmingly approved](#) a \$36.5 billion relief package for Puerto Rico and other impacted regions. It is headed to the Senate, where it is expected to be approved.

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WEATHER

Piden abrir la Sala de Emergencias del Hospital Municipal de San Juan

(Primera Hora)

Primerahora.com

10/16/2017 |09:14 a.m.

Due the weather conditions, a bridge in Cidra collapsed this morning. Ten families were left incommunicado, the police added

Un puente localizado en la carretera PR-734 del sector Campo Bello en Cidra colapsó durante la mañana de hoy, lunes, informó la Policía.

Según datos preliminares, los hechos ocurrieron a las 8:00 a.m. cuando el puente se derrumbó debido a las inclemencias del tiempo.

Diez familias quedaron incomunicadas, agrega la querrela del Centro de Operaciones de Radio Control.

No se reportaron heridos

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Todo Puerto Rico bajo vigilancia de inundaciones (Primera Hora)

10/16/2017 |09:19 a.m.

Primerahora.com

The National Meteorology Service (SNM) maintains a flood watch for all of Puerto Rico until midnight today, due to the rains that continue to whip the island. Downpours will be impacting mostly the eastern region of the island and during the afternoon will be extended to other portions of the island. Due to the saturation of the soils, it is warned that any rain can cause flooding in several municipalities

El Servicio Nacional de Meteorología (SNM) mantiene una vigilancia de inundaciones para todo Puerto Rico hasta la medianoche de hoy, debido a las lluvias que continúan azotando la isla.

Según el meteorólogo Jesús Figueroa, del SNM, aunque la onda tropical que afectó ayer parte de la isla se encuentra bastante lejos detrás de este fenómeno atmosférico hay áreas extensas de humedad que están propiciando el desarrollo de aguaceros y tormentas eléctricas en varios sectores de la isla.

Estos aguaceros estarán impactando hoy la región este de la isla y durante la tarde se extenderán a otras porciones del país.

Como los suelos continúan saturados, Figueroa advirtió que cualquier lluvia adicional podrá ocasionar inundaciones en varios pueblos.

"Va a seguir lloviendo y cualquier lluvia adicional se convierte en escorrentías, lo que causa problemas de inundaciones", expuso el meteorólogo.

De hecho, debido al paso de la onda tropical ayer se registraron de dos a cuatro pulgadas de lluvia, mayormente en la mitad este y sureste del país. En el municipio de San Lorenzo, por ejemplo, se registraron 4.32 pulgadas de agua.

Figueroa indicó que el SNM también mantiene un aviso de inundaciones para el municipio Yabucoa hasta las 9:30 a.m. de hoy, ya que el río Guayanés se encuentra en un nivel bastante alto.

"Aunque el río está bajando sigue sobre el nivel de inundaciones. Se espera que en las próximas horas el nivel baje", manifestó el meteorólogo.

Ante estas condiciones del tiempo, el mar está bastante picado con olas de hasta ocho pies, por lo que hay una advertencia para los operadores de pequeñas embarcaciones.

Además, hay un potencial moderado de corrientes submarinas para la costa norte y sur de Puerto Rico.

Figueroa sostuvo que esta actividad de lluvias y tronadas continuará, al menos, hasta este jueves, ya que para el fin de semana se espera que un patrón de aire seco entre a nuestra región, mejorando las condiciones del tiempo.

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Colapsan dos puentes en Bayamón y Cidra ospital Municipal de San Juan (El Nuevo Día)

lunes, 16 de octubre de 2017 - 1:45 PM

[El Nuevo Dia](#)

Two bridges collapsed today, one in the municipality of Bayamón and another in the municipality of Cidra due to the heavy rains that continue to affect the island.

Dos puentes colapsaron hoy, uno en el municipio de Bayamón y otro en el municipio de Cidra debido a las fuertes lluvias que continúan afectando la isla.

Según la Oficina de Prensa de la Policía, uno de los derrumbes ocurrió en la carretera PR-830 del barrio Cerro Gordo en Bayamón, impidiendo el paso de los conductores.

El tránsito se interrumpió a la altura del kilómetro 23, agregó la Uniformada.

Asimismo, un puente ubicado en la carretera PR-734 del sector Campo Bello en Cidra colapsó durante la mañana de hoy.

Según datos preliminares, los hechos ocurrieron a las 8:00 a.m. cuando el puente se derrumbó debido a las inclemencias del tiempo.

Diez familias quedaron incomunicadas, agrega la querrela del Centro de Operaciones de Radio Control.

No se reportaron heridos.

Piden abrir la Sala de Emergencias del Hospital Municipal de San Juan

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Se registran deslizamientos de tierra en Caguas y Aguas Buenas (Primera Hora)

10/16/2017 |01:31 p.m.

[Primera Hora](#)

The authorities reported on two landslides that obstruct the roads of Caguas and Aguas Buenas. Emergency management personnel from both municipalities attend to the situation.

Las autoridades informaron sobre dos deslizamientos de terreno que obstruyen carreteras de Caguas y Aguas Buenas.

Según la Policía a media mañana de hoy, lunes, ocurrió un deslizamiento de tierra en la carretera PR-798 a la altura del kilómetro 1.7 en el barrio Río Cañas de Caguas.

El segundo deslizamiento se reportó en la carretera PR-173 en jurisdicción del sector La Mula en el barrio Jagüeyes de Aguas Buenas un tramo quedó intransitable.

Personal de Manejo de Emergencias de ambos municipios atienden la situación.

De otro lado, la Policía indicó que hay un río fuera de su cauce en el sector Los Reyes en Caguas, por lo que se recomendó a los conductores a tomar vías alternas.

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Investigan al Municipio de Patillas por manejo de suministros (Primera Hora)

Gloria Ruiz Kuilan 10/16/2017 |02:29 p.m.

Primera Hora

The authorities reported on two landslides that obstruct the roads of Caguas and Aguas Buenas. Emergency management personnel from both municipalities attend to the situation.

El Departamento de Justicia comenzó hoy una investigación contra el Municipio de Patillas luego de que en una inspección realizada hoy se encontraran, supuestamente, alimentos y agua provista por la Agencia federal de Manejo de Emergencias (**FEMA**, por sus siglas en inglés) tirada en un contenedor destinado para la basura, informó hoy lunes la secretaria de Justicia, Wanda Vázquez.

“Encontramos suministros tirados en una carpa que cuando empezó a llover no se guardaron. Aquí se asignó un fiscal y un agente de la policía para que hagan un inventario porque el problema es que hay personas que dicen que vieron ratas allí. Por lo tanto, muy probablemente toda esa mercancía haya que decomisarla”, dijo la secretaria.

Dijo que visitaron el centro de acopio del Municipio de Patillas tras recibir esta mañana una querrela alertando sobre el supuesto mal manejo de la ayuda de **FEMA**.

“Esto lo que amerita es que el Departamento de Justicia verifique todos los centros de acopio”, afirmó Vázquez.

La secretaria recordó que el gobernador Ricardo Rosselló dio la directriz la semana pasada de investigar cómo se estaban manejando los suministros ante las incesantes quejas de alcaldes y personas afectadas por el huracán de que la ayuda les llegaba tarde o era escasa.

“Hay funcionarios que no están entregando los suministros tan pronto los reciben”, abundó la secretaria de Justicia.

Dijo que al dejarle saber al alcalde de Patillas, Norberto Soto Figueroa, que se comenzaría una investigación, este dijo que “como llovió pues...”.

No fue posible conseguir al alcalde a través de su celular.

Vázquez indicó que todo funcionario que se halle incurso en mal manejo de estos suministros o los retenga se expone a negligencia en el cumplimiento del deber.

“De igual manera, siendo propiedad federal se va a referir para investigación del FBI y se puede exponer a una pena de hasta 20 años”, sostuvo Vázquez.

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POWER / INFRASTRUCTURE / COMMUNICATIONS

Solar Industry Sees the Opportunity to Build Puerto Rico's Grid of the Future (Bloomberg)

The island is focused on restoring power as quickly as possible, but it can't ignore the chance to rethink its entire energy grid.

By Naureen S Malik and Brian Eckhouse

October 16, 2017, 2:38 PM GMT-4

Bloomberg

It began with a question posed by Richard Birt, a Las Vegas Fire & Rescue captain: What do you need?

The answer for the San Juan fire house was simple enough: electricity. It's what much of Puerto Rico has needed since Hurricane Maria tore through the commonwealth more than three weeks ago,

laying waste to an already weak grid. Without power, basic logistics such as coordinating and transporting equipment had proven insurmountable.

At the station in Barrio Obrero—Spanish for “workers’ neighborhood”—the situation was dire. A single diesel generator failed at times thanks to contaminated fuel. Firefighters were mostly working in darkness, relying on word-of-mouth to serve the mounting needs of a low-income community. “There are more incidents because people are using hibachis, generators and candles,” said Francisco Cruz, a lieutenant with the San Juan fire department. Nearby, a large tree covered in electrical wires blocked a main road to the station, which helps serve the city’s airport.

Sunrun brought over smaller solar panels with batteries to power water desalination tanks, left. Firefighters and Sunrun employees install panels on the roof of the Barrio Obrero fire station in San Juan to set up a microgrid to keep the lights and communications equipment running.

Birt suggested a micro-grid featuring solar and battery storage and began mobilizing a team to help put it all together. Funding for the project was provided by Empowered by Light (a group backed by Leonardo DiCaprio), rooftop company Sunrun Inc. (which also donated the solar panels), and GivePower, a nonprofit that specializes in solar installation in conflict regions.

The solar industry has [taken particular interest](#) in San Juan in the aftermath of the hurricane. It’s primarily a humanitarian effort for these companies, but it’s also a chance to showcase an energy source capable of enduring natural disasters. Tesla Inc. is [sending](#) its Powerwall battery systems, Sunrun has pledged more than 8,000 pounds of solar products and rooftop company Vivint Solar Inc. is helping with shipments. The Solar Energy Industries Association has received [pledges](#) for more than \$1.2 million in product and monetary contributions from its network.

A week and a half after Birt’s initial outreach, a plane arrived in San Juan carrying enough solar panels and batteries to install 18.4 kilowatts worth of systems. The installations in Barrio Obrero were completed two days later, about 13 hours after President Donald Trump, who has noted the commonwealth’s [long-standing financial and electrical woes](#), [tweeted](#): “We cannot keep FEMA, the Military & the First Responders, who have been amazing (under the most difficult circumstances) in P.R. forever!”

Some hope the crisis will spur greater energy self-reliance. “We should be more flexible, to allow regions to have their own systems,” said Marco Antonio Rigau, president of San Juan’s city council, in an interview. “We are not using solar energy completely.”

“We put solar on the roof because the sun comes up every day,” Birt said, who himself has lived off the grid using solar and batteries for more than a dozen years. “It’s not going to run out of diesel like a generator or have a problem. The sun comes up, it charges the battery and the batteries are full every day waiting for the power to go down.”

Sunrun is using these charitable installations, that will allow the firehouses to produce their own power for lights and communications equipment, as a test for setting up more microgrids around the island, said Chris Rauscher, director of public policy for the company.

Providing storage is crucial at this point; solar panels alone can’t provide round-the-clock power. With the grid down, existing panels atop Puerto Rico homes and Wal-Mart Stores Inc. stores that are affiliated with utility Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, or Prepa, have failed to operate.

Houston-based Sunnova Energy Corp., which has 10,000 residential customers in Puerto Rico who depend on Prepa, is asking battery providers to send shipments to the island on the expectation that restrictions preventing their use will be eliminated. Chief Executive Officer John Berger said he met last week with Governor Ricardo Rossello for assistance “to cut the red tape to allow those batteries to come in and allow our customers to have power.”

But for now, logistics remain a problem. Because of limited cargo space, some goods are being sent to a Miami warehouse. “We are going to continue to solicit donations and try to arrange transportation,” said SEIA spokesman Dan Whitten in an email.

Getting the power back on is [the current priority](#), Governor Ricardo Rosello told a Bloomberg News reporter in San Juan on Friday, but more thought must be given to the future of the energy grid. (He has already held an “initial conversation” with Elon Musk on the subject, he recently [tweeted](#).) The island must “give ourselves an opportunity to not just rebuild the old system but rather to establish a platform so that we can consider microgrids” and other uses of renewable sources, he said.

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HEALTH / DEATHS / ENVIRONMENTAL

Bacterial Infections the Latest Health Issue to Hit Puerto Rico (Healthline)

Written by Gigen Mammoser

October 16, 2017

[Fact Checked](#)

[Healthline](#)

The hurricane-ravaged island is struggling with a variety of health problems caused by contaminated water, power outages, and a lack of medical supplies.

Hurricane Maria is long gone.

But Puerto Rico is still struggling to overcome a growing healthcare crisis.

So far, 48 deaths have [been attributed to the hurricane](#) since it made landfall on Sept. 20.

And that number appears to be growing almost by the day.

More than 100 people are still missing.

Plus, a bacterial infection caused by contaminated water is starting to spread across the island territory.

Damage to major infrastructure, including roads and electrical facilities, has also created new challenges as well.

Basic medical supplies are sorely needed.

“The initial and the ongoing need right now that has come up over and over again is the medications needed to manage chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension,” said Danielle Butin, founder of the [Afya Foundation](#), a New York-based organization that distributes surplus medical supplies and humanitarian provisions for healthcare crises around the world.

Afya has so far delivered more than 3,000 vials of insulin as part of 10 airlifts of medication and supplies to Puerto Rico valued at more than \$1.7 million in the past weeks.

Access and supplies

Outside the capital and metropolitan center of San Juan, access to healthcare and the ability to deliver supplies has become increasingly difficult.

“There has been really, really poor coordination and distribution of medical supplies and medical care in the rural areas,” Butin told Healthline.

She said their next focus will be to help supply nursing homes with basic supplies, including diapers for elderly and frail patients.

Elderly patients and those with chronic illnesses that require ongoing treatment, such as dialysis, are particularly at risk because of the hurricane’s damage to Puerto Rico’s electrical grid.

In Florida, [14 elderly nursing home patients died](#) after their care center lost power when Hurricane Irma hit the state in early September.

No power, no water

In Puerto Rico, there’s an urgency to get adequate generators supplied with fuel to keep hospitals up and running.

“There are people who require generators for life-sustaining measures,” said Butin. “They require electricity to run medical machinery and there aren't enough generators operating. There aren't enough generators to distribute for what's needed at this point.”

An estimated 84 percent of Puerto Rico is still [without power](#).

Reuters [reported](#) that in some instances, fuel for hospital generators has been delivered by armed guards to protect against looting.

Fresh water is also an ongoing problem that has led to an increase in bacterial infections. Forty percent of the population is believed to still be [without running water](#).

[Leptospirosis](#), a disease that can be spread by animal urine and flood waters is being investigated as the cause of [four deaths so far](#).

The disease can cause kidney damage, meningitis, and respiratory disorders.

“People are drinking out of creeks that are incredibly problematic. Water access and treated waters is a huge issue,” said Butin.

Drinking from a stream is believed to have caused at least one of the cases of leptospirosis.

The spread of contaminated water either through flooding or from drinking from a polluted source also increases the risk of other serious diseases, including [cholera](#) and [hepatitis](#).

[Conjunctivitis](#) (pink eye), caused by fecal matter, has seen an uptick on the island.

“Conjunctivitis is everywhere, so now they are in need of medicated eye drops,” said Butin.

A worried population

Beyond the acute and immediate medical needs on the island, there's also a specter of despair brought on by the near constant back and forth between the island's leadership and President Trump.

The president's [public comments](#) have done little to calm the fears of those in Puerto Rico.

His [statement last Thursday](#) that federal workers may leave the island soon added to those worries.

“They are really scared there,” said Butin. “People are worried about where they are going to get their medication. People are worried about getting sick.”

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Piden abrir la Sala de Emergencias del Hospital Municipal de San Juan (El Nuevo Día)

lunes, 16 de octubre de 2017 - 5:00 AM

[El Nuevo Día](#)

A group of doctors and employees of the San Juan Municipal Hospital asked the capital's mayor, Carmen Yulín Cruz, to reopen the emergency room of that health center, which was closed after the passage of Hurricane Irma by Puerto Rico. The San Juan Mayor stated that hospital facilities will remain close up to the rest of the Hurricane Season

Un grupo de médicos y empleados del Hospital Municipal de San Juan le solicitaron a la alcaldesa de la capital, Carmen Yulín Cruz, que reabra la Sala de Emergencias de ese centro de salud, la que fue cerrada luego del paso del huracán Irma por Puerto Rico.

"Durante el paso del Huracán Irma una de las plantas eléctricas destinada a la Sala de Emergencias se dañó y la Alcaldesa mando a cerrar la Sala de Emergencias de Adultos y Pediatría y aún no ha querido abrirla por mero capricho", dijo anoche a endi.com un médico que pidió que no se le identificara.

El Hospital Municipal de San Juan, que ubica en el Centro Médico de Río Piedras, es a donde los médicos de las Salas de Emergencias de los Centros de Diagnóstico y Tratamiento de la capital refieren a los pacientes que necesitan cuidado clínico de nivel terciario.

Además, ese hospital atiende a pacientes que llegan a la Sala de Emergencias. El médico que habló con endi.com dijo que tanto la Sala de Emergencias para adultos como la pediátrica están cerradas y que solo se mantiene abierta la de OBGYN o partos.

"(Cruz) le prestó una planta eléctrica a la Alcaldesa de Loíza, teniendo nuestro hospital la necesidad. Este reclamo ya le costó el puesto al director médico. Es por eso que hablamos a condición de que no se nos identifique", dijo la fuente.

"Nos hemos comunicado con la Alcaldesa por diferentes vías y su posición es que no va a abrir hasta que culmine la temporada de huracanes", afirmó el galeno.

"Esto pone en riesgo la vida de cientos de pacientes que necesitan de nuestro cuidado. Así que hacemos un llamado al Secretario de Salud y la Procuradora de Paciente y del Envejeciente para que intervengan" con la Cruz.

Por su parte, un médico residente alertó sobre las consecuencias de tener la Sala de Emergencias cerrada. "Vamos a perder la acreditación de la Comisión Conjunta de Hospitales que nos permite atender pacientes de Medicare. También perderemos la acreditación de los programa de residencia médicas", expresó.

La Sala de Emergencias municipal tiene 50 camillas y el hospital tiene licencia para 300 camas. La plantilla de empleados es de más de 700 personas.

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113 personas continúan desaparecidas tras el paso del huracán María (El Nuevo Día)

lunes, 16 de octubre de 2017 - 12:35 PM

[El Nuevo Día](#)

A list of 113 people lost are offered by state police from 13 Municipalities. Family reported last see them on September 20, after Maria hurricane

Son hijos, hijas, hermanas, primos, nietas, padres, madres, abuelos... 113 puertorriqueños, 113 seres queridos, que fueron vistos por última vez el 20 de septiembre de 2017, durante el azote el huracán María.

A continuación, la lista de nombres por zona policiaca, suministrada por el Departamento de Seguridad Pública. El listado fue actualizado por última vez el domingo 15 de octubre.

Área policiaca: Aguadilla

1. Rodolfo Agrelot Segui
2. Yarilin Vélez González
3. Edwin Santos Méndez
4. Alberto Aldarondo Segui
5. Wandalina Fonseca
6. Celestino González Cruz
7. Antonio L. García Berrios
8. Glorimar Crespo Mejías
9. María Isabel López Ramírez
10. Ramón Nieves Matos
11. Dayan Gerena Matías
12. Jenifer Román
13. Nakia Román
14. Dayanara Ortiz
15. Marcos Cortés Rivera
16. Nericelena Caro Echevarrias
17. Joel Omar Rivera Beniquez

18. Wilfeedo Sánchez Valentín
19. Rodolfo Angueira Segui

Área policiaca: Aibonito

20. José Rivera Rodríguez
21. José A. Mendoza Pérez
22. Emmanuel Rodríguez Robles

Área policiaca: Arecibo

23. Luis Ortiz González
24. Daniel Onil Acevedo
25. Sheila García Rodríguez
26. Juan Olmo Cortés
27. Jessinette Rosa Hernández
28. Manuel Cruz Rodríguez

Área policiaca: Bayamón

29. Elina S. León Meléndez
30. Sheila Jaime Lugo Lirazno
31. Ivelisse Claudio
32. Benny Flores Cruz
33. Yadiriz Vázquez Nater
34. José A. Mercado Martínez
35. Orlando Rivera Camacho
36. Luis R. Matos González
37. Emmanuel Ortiz Rodríguez
38. Lester Rivera Martínez

Área policiaca: Caguas

39. Kenneth Jiménez Tayson
40. Martha Carrasquillo Ferrer
41. Álex J. Medina Vega
42. José L. Pabón del Valle
43. María Montes Hernández
44. Stephania Robles Rodríguez
45. Jean P. Velázquez Rosario
46. Miguel González Sánchez
47. Nelly Alicea Guzmán
48. Janelisse Castro Cruz
49. Joeluis A. Pabón del Valle
50. Luis Medina Díaz
51. Vidal A. Amrao Alicea
52. José M. Jiménez Hernández
53. Adam David Torres Félix
54. Yampier González Félix
55. Nilda Ferrer Díaz
56. Ángel L. Jiménez
57. Miriam I. Santos Escribano
58. José Osorio Suárez

59. Álex Morales Álamo
60. Emmanuel Montañez Ojeda

Área policiaca: Carolina

61. Benjamín Pizarro Díaz
62. Nelson J. Martínez Rivera
63. Luis A. Escobar García
64. Johany Benítez Collazo
65. Jesús M. Betancourt Cedres
66. Julio Ayuso Rivera
67. Javier Omar Soto Hiraldo
68. Josean Omar Soto Hiraldo
69. Juan Guerrero Figueroa

Área policiaca: Fajardo

70. Rubén Quiñones Segarra
71. Francisco García Pérez
72. Yarelis Santiago Martínez
73. Fernando Omar Cruz Rivera
74. William Fernández Rodríguez

Área policiaca: Guayama

75. Gilberto Rivera López
76. Irving Díaz Viñas
77. John Jr. Díaz Torres
78. Luis Reinaldo Fonseca
79. Juan A. Olmo Cortez
80. Misael Ocasio Vázquez

Área policiaca: Humacao

81. Raúl López Cay

Área policiaca: Mayagüez

82. Luis Cintrón Goden
83. Luis Matías
84. Carlos Flores Torres
85. Marilyn Luciano Rivera
86. Zenaida Martínez
87. Luis Negrón Ramírez
88. José A. Zapata Ramírez
89. Miriam I. Cabán Bermúdez
90. Angeli Luis Morales Rodríguez
91. Henry Ramos Camacho

Área policiaca: Ponce

92. Maritza Rivera Colón
93. Neisha Robles Lee
94. Roberto Maldonado Figueroa
95. Santos Salcedo

96. Ernesto de Jesús Echevarría
97. Juliet Yarelis Torres Martínez
98. Ezequiel Cardona Albarrán
99. Alexandra Pañiño Rivera
100. Melanie Dávila Meléndez
101. Alvin Manuel Rivera López

Área policiaca: San Juan

102. Daniel José García Ortiz
103. Delia Boria Quiñones
104. Raúl Cepeda Ortiz
105. Harrison Isaac Sánchez Berrios
106. Keyslyann Rivera Burgos
107. Víctor Manuel de León Marengo
108. Aleysha Sánchez Delgado
109. Jamal Velázquez Díaz

Área policiaca: Utuado

110. Minerva Pérez Santiago
111. Miguel A. Santiago Santos
112. Juan Caraballo Cruz
113. Juan Vázquez Montañez

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BUSINESS

A month after hurricane, only half of Puerto Rico's banks are open (CNN)

'The lines are endless'

By Patrick Gillespie

Posted: 9:20 AM, October 16, 2017 Updated: 9:39 AM, October 16, 2017

[CNN](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) - Half the banks in Puerto Rico are still closed, almost a month after Hurricane Maria.

For weeks, Puerto Ricans have been waiting in long lines to get cash, food, water and gas. But banks have had a harder time reopening than other stores.

Nearly 80% of gas stations are open, and 86% of supermarkets. But only 157 of 314 bank branches on the island are open, according to government figures. About 870 ATMs are working, but the government can't say how many were working before the storm.

Most businesses are still without power and are only accepting cash. The island isn't low on bills: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in September that two "giant" cash shipments had been sent. But the devastated electric grid, poor cell service and other problems make it difficult to safely coordinate deliveries of money.

"When the telecommunication is down and the energy is down in most of the places, then you're going to have to do a cash-based economy," Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello told CNNMoney earlier this month.

One complication has been finding enough drivers to deliver the cash in armored trucks. Another is finding gas. And the lack of power makes it hard for banks to bring software security systems back online.

Progress is being made. Two weeks ago, only 40% of banks were open. But the long wait is still too much for many people.

"The lines are endless," says Cely Rivera, a 37-year-old mother of two in Guayanilla, on the southern coast. "There isn't any communication."

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SURVIVOR' STORIES

We asked Puerto Ricans about their future plans. Many want to stay and rebuild. (PRI)

Hear directly from some of them, below.

[PRI's The World](#)

Oct. 16, 2017 · 9:00 AM EDT

By [Jasmine Garsd](#) and [Andrea Crossan](#)

[Public Radio International](#)

As some Puerto Ricans fill flights to Miami, we asked a handful of people in San Juan their thoughts about leaving their homes for the mainland US. About 3.4 million people live in Puerto Rico, and some will choose to leave the island behind and move permanently.

The House passed a \$36.5 billion aid package last week and on Sunday, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricard Rosselló said he expected power to be restored to 95 percent of the island's electric grid by Dec. 15. Currently, 85 percent of the island is still without electricity.

Most of the people we spoke to responded that they would not leave their families behind but planned to stay and rebuild.

"I'm going to lose people that I have known."

"I do have quite a few neighbors that have already gone to Miami, which is where most of them are leaving to. And a lot of them already bought their trip, their one-way trip to Miami and they're just waiting, and the flights have been cancelled. I feel sorry that I'm going to lose people that...that I have known."— Yolanda Prosper, teacher, San Juan resident

"I need to help, and I need to be part of this rebuilding."

"So I would love to stay, and I wanna stay, at least for...I feel like this: I need to help, and I need to be part of this rebuilding. But at the same time, like professionally, it's going to be like devastating like for my career staying here. It's gonna be terrible because it's gonna be one, two years of doing absolutely nothing with my career. So I would have to rethink myself and do something else. I have no problem with it, but, you know, it's a decision I have to make."— Gabriel Rodriguez, production and creative director at an advertising agency, San Juan resident

"... it's very shocking to see how my island is right now."

"I never lived in the United States, so I stay. And for me, it's very shocking for me to see how my island is right now." — Maria Olivero, acting public affairs officer at VA Caribbean Healthcare System

"... I can leave no one behind."

"My kids are here, my family, everybody else, so I can leave no one behind. You know, I need to help them. Still it's going to be a sucky part of it, but I gotta do it."— César Gutiérrez, Marine Corps veteran, San Juan resident

Produced by Alex Newman; edited by Anna Pratt. Reporting and images by Jasmine Garsd and Andrea Crossan in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lead image by Carlos Barria/Reuters.

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A casi un mes de María, aún hay 5,000 refugiados (Primera Hora)

Prensa Asociada

10/16/2017 | 07:06 a.m.

[Primera Hora](#)

Over 5,000 people who lost their homes and now live in temporary shelters throughout the island. The 85% of the island remains without power electricity and about 40% do not have access to water for the last three weeks, since hurricane Maria

TOA BAJA, Puerto Rico. Arden Dragoni y su familia perdieron todo cuando el huracán María devastó Puerto Rico el mes pasado. Sólo algunas paredes de su casa de madera siguen en pie. Su ropa, muebles, otros bienes del hogar y su viejo automóvil están en ruinas.

Dragoní, su esposa Sindy, sus tres hijos y su perro Max viven ahora en un albergue establecido dentro de una escuela en este pueblo en la costa norte de Puerto Rico. Él mantenía a su familia como trabajador de la construcción, pero su empleador cerró el negocio, por lo que Dragoní se quedó sin una fuente de ingresos.

Están entre las más de 5,000 personas que perdieron sus viviendas y ahora viven en albergues temporales en toda la isla, donde cerca el 85% de la isla sigue sin suministro eléctrico del Estado y cerca del 40% carece de acceso regular de agua tres semanas después del paso de la tormenta.

La mayoría de la gente que está en los albergues perdió su vivienda por inundaciones, que fueron especialmente intensas en comunidades tales como Toa Baja. Las casas y los apartamentos se llenaron de aguas turbias, las cuales se llevaron los electrodomésticos y destruyeron todo lo que había en el interior.

En la escuela Ernestina Bracero Pérez en Toa Baja hay 73 personas de todas las edades que duermen en los salones de clase, se bañan con agua de lluvia y pasan el tiempo en el patio.

La familia de Dragoní comparte espacio con otra familia en un salón de clases en la escuela.

La pareja llevó a su hijo Ian al hospital después de que le salió una ampolla detrás de la oreja, ya que el agua contaminada ha estado provocando enfermedades en algunas personas, pero el doctor lo diagnosticó como un salpullido común.

Agustina Lugo, una anciana de salud delicada, también se refugió en la escuela después de que la tormenta del 20 de septiembre inundó su casa. Dijo que no había tenido contacto con sus parientes hasta que una sobrina la localizó recientemente.

Las autoridades escolares dicen que la escuela no puede reabrir hasta que las víctimas desplazadas por las inundaciones puedan retirarse de ella. Las autoridades locales intentan hallarles un nuevo albergue en el poblado.

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EDUCATION

Estimados de UPR superan los \$100 millones en daños (Primera Hora)

10/16/2017 | 01:32 p.m.

Alex Figueroa Cancel

[Primera Hora](#)

University Of Puerto Rico reports the institution's damages are over \$100 million but that the students will be able to complete their academic courses.

Con la actualización de los informes de daños, el presidente interino de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (UPR), Darrel Hillman, informó hoy que los daños en la institución ascienden a sobre \$100 millones.

A la vez que aseguró que el año académico no se perderá y los estudiantes podrán completar sus cursos, Hillman indicó que el monto de los daños ha ido en aumento según han continuado las evaluaciones de las estructuras y de los equipos.

“La UPR, como todos, sufrió un gran embate”, expresó Hillman. “Ya hemos evaluado edificios. Entró mucha agua en los planteles. Estamos trabajando con el hongo y otras situaciones”.

“Empezamos con unos estimados, pero según se van energizando los edificios, nos vamos dando cuenta de equipos que se dañaron”, agregó.

El funcionario sostuvo que inicialmente la UPR trabajará con su seguro privado, que cubre hasta \$100 millones.

Luego, lo que supere dicho tope y los deducibles - que pudieran superar los \$2 millones - serían costeados por **FEMA**, según Hillman.

Señaló que el recinto que más daños sufrió “por pies cuadrados” fue Humacao, donde la cantidad estimada ronda los \$34 millones.

“Estamos trabajando con todo esto, pero los estudiantes pueden estar seguros de que no perderán el año y que podrán continuar con sus carreras académicas”, explicó Hillman.

“Van a completar este semestre aunque sea (terminando) en febrero. No obstante, comenzaría el segundo semestre para que se termine antes del 30 de junio”, abundó el presidente interino, al mencionar la posibilidad de reponer el tiempo lectivo con sábados y métodos alternativos.

Asimismo, mencionó que ofrecerán la flexibilidad de que estudiantes puedan completar cursos en recintos que tengan más cerca de sus casas, aunque sea diferente al que esté matriculado.

Después de que el Recinto de Ciencias Médicas comenzara a dar clases - pese a algunas interrupciones - el pasado 9 de octubre, los recintos de Carolina y Arecibo iniciarán el 23 de octubre.

“Luego, la próxima semana, el 30 de octubre, empezarán todos los demás recintos, con excepción de Cayey”, señaló Hillman.

“Cayey se va a tomar una semana adicional por una avería que tuvo la subestación eléctrica”, añadió. “Eso se está trabajando internamente en el campus”.

Los únicos recintos que todavía no tienen servicio de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) son Cayey, Humacao y Utuado.

Carolina tampoco tiene, pero Hillman dijo que tienen un generador que le permite las operaciones esenciales.

En el caso de Ponce, comentó que sí tiene el servicio de la AEE, pero están atendiendo algunas averías internas.

Por otro lado, Hillman indicó que sí podrán abrir las residencias de estudiantes, aunque se están preparando para un “plan B”

“Se pudieran usar escuelas públicas. Ya tenemos asignada la (escuela) José Celso Barbosa en Río Piedras para hospedarlos (a los universitarios) si fuera necesario”, informó.

En dicha escuela el gobierno estableció uno de los puntos denominados “stop-and-go”, donde se preparan comidas calientes para personas afectadas por el huracán.

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EMIGRATION

City to help displaced hurricane victims, families at new Manhattan center (AM New York)

By Lauren Cook

October 16, 2017

[AM New York](#)

A service center dedicated to helping people displaced by recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Texas and Florida will open later this week, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday.

The center, set to open Thursday, will offer access to city services and in-person support from a range of government offices, including social services, health and mental hygiene, education and senior services. Representatives from the American Red Cross, New York Disaster Interfaith Services, Animal Care and Control and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will also be on hand to help people affected by the recent hurricanes and their families.

“New York City will help those affected by recent hurricanes in any way we can. We’ve been sending donations and emergency responders to affected areas, and now we’re setting up a central location to help displaced people in our city receive essential services and assistance,” the mayor said in an emailed statement.

Services will be provided at the Julia De Burgos Latino Cultural Center, at 1680 Lexington Ave. in East Harlem. The center will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Anyone looking for assistance can set up an appointment ahead of time, beginning Wednesday, by visiting nyc.gov or calling 311.

The city has already begun to prepare for what it anticipates will be an influx of displaced people from hurricane-ravaged areas, particularly residents from Puerto Rico. New York has one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the country, with over 1 million residents of Puerto Rican descent currently living in the state.

City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito said on Monday that the city must step up where “the federal government has come up short,” apparently referencing President Donald Trump’s response to Hurricane Maria.

“This is a humanitarian crisis the likes our city has ever experienced and we must do everything we can to help our fellow Puerto Ricans who have given so much to our city and to our country,” said Mark-Viverito, who visited the island in the aftermath of Maria.

Last week, Public Advocate Letitia James called on the de Blasio administration to do more to prepare for an influx of displaced people and proposed a range of initiatives that could help people in need.

De Blasio has said the city is preparing, but also warned that resources were already tight.

“I don’t want to encourage people to come here if they don’t have some family to turn to,” de Blasio said at unrelated news conference last Thursday. “We have to be really clear about this.”

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has also called on SUNY and CUNY schools to allow those affected by the hurricanes to pay in-state tuition rates to attend the school.

With Alison Fox and Laura Figueroa

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Puerto Rican students continue schooling in mainland U.S. (TribLIVE)

By [Jamie Martines](#) | Monday, Oct. 16, 2017

[TribLive/Trib Total Media](#) (Pennsylvania)

Dozens more students from Puerto Rico, will continue school in the mainland United States this week after Hurricane Maria shut down local schools.

Students have traveled as far as Connecticut, [Massachusetts](#) and Pennsylvania to live with family members and attend school. [NPR reports](#) that of Puerto Rico's 1,113 schools, only about 200 have reopened because of debris and a lack of electricity.

Julia Keleher, Puerto Rico's secretary of education, told NPR that students have lost between 35 and 40 instructional days because of the hurricane. This could have a significant impact on students' academic achievement.

As of Thursday, the Miami-Dade County school district had enrolled 251 Puerto Rican students. Orange County schools had enrolled nearly 300 students from Puerto Rico and 92 from the U.S. Virgin Islands, [EdWeek reports](#).

The [Orlando Sentinel reports](#) nearly 40 students have enrolled in Volusia County schools in Florida since Hurricane Maria hit.

Last week, some families traveled from Puerto Rico to Broward County aboard a Royal Caribbean International Cruise ship, where local school district officials greeted them upon arrival and shared information about enrolling school-age students, [Politico reports](#).

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WHITE HOUSE / CONGRESS / POLITICS

Rep. Nydia Velazquez: Puerto Rico 'Could Become Another Flint' (Daily Beast)

The New York congresswoman shared serious concerns with the lack of federal aid Puerto Rico has received.

[Hayley Jones](#)

10.16.17 2:34 PM ET

[Daily Beast](#)

Representative Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) is done with the [federal government's lackluster response](#) to the [devastation in Puerto Rico](#).

On CNN, Congresswoman Velazquez—who is also the first Puerto Rican woman elected to the House—expressed [great concern for the future of Puerto Rico](#).

After being [devastated by Hurricane Maria](#), Puerto Rico residents have resorted to drinking water from [Superfund sites](#). These are known hazardous-waste sites.

“This is one Superfund site we are aware of, but there are 14 Superfund sites in Puerto Rico,” Velazquez told host Kate Bolduan. “So, the extent of the damage, this could become another Flint where so many children, old people—regular people in Puerto Rico could get affected.”

She continued, “We’re talking about contaminants, toxins, material, oil that are in this water.”

“And I’m really very concerned for this to happen in America, it’s just heartbreaking,” Velazquez added.

Bolduan goes on to ask Velazquez about her response to one of President Trump’s tweets saying federal first responders cannot stay in Puerto Rico forever.

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OPINION

Hurricane Victims Don't Have the 'Complexion for Protection' (Common Dreams)

A full-blown humanitarian crisis is on the horizon.

By [Lois Marie Gibbs](#)

Monday, Oct. 16, 2017

[Common Dreams](#)

Millions of Puerto Ricans are still without water, food, electricity and shelter, four weeks after Hurricane Maria destroyed the island. [With waterborne illnesses on the rise, a full-blown humanitarian crisis is on the horizon.](#)

“Raw sewage continues to be released into waterways and is expected to continue until repairs can be made and power is restored,” EPA warns in a memo.

Eighty-four percent of Puerto Rico is without electricity, and sixty percent of water treatment plants are out of service.

“Water contaminated with livestock waste, human sewage, chemicals, and other contaminants can lead to illness when used for drinking, bathing, and other hygiene activities,” says **FEMA**.

To make matters worse, Puerto Rico is home to 21 Superfund sites – the nation’s most deadly depositories of toxic chemicals. The island also has a five-story-high coal ash dump in Guayama that was hit by the storm.

[Floodwaters have already mixed deadly toxins from these sites into nearby waterways](#), which residents are forced to use to bathe and drink. In a desperate attempt to save their own lives, [some Puerto Ricans are drinking highly contaminated water](#) from wells that were once sealed to avoid exposure to deadly toxins.

Families who have lost everything now must contend with the possibility that their groundwater is tainted with poison.

The Complexion for Protection

On the same day **FEMA** issued its warning, President Trump took to Twitter to complain, “We cannot keep **FEMA**, the Military & the First Responders... in P.R. forever!”

First, Mr. President, a reality check. The devastation caused by major storms takes years, not weeks, to repair. **FEMA** is still at work in New Orleans, twelve years after Hurricane Katrina, and in New Jersey and New York five years after Hurricane Sandy. EPA cleanup of contaminated sites takes even longer.

Second, a political check. [Puerto Ricans are American citizens, and have been for more than a century.](#) They serve in our Armed Forces and pay taxes, even if they weren’t allowed to vote for you – or any candidate – for President, and have no representation in Congress.

As Puerto Rico’s Governor, [Roberto Roselló, wrote in his response to Trump’s Twitter tantrum](#), “The U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico are requesting the support that any of our fellow citizens would receive across our Nation.”

This is discrimination, plain and simple. When President Trump visited San Juan, he threw paper towels at a crowd of suffering people and scolded them for busting his budget. They weren’t amused by his theatrics.

They, like the Houston residents who live near waterways fouled by toxins from the San Jacinto Superfund site, are people of color – apparently not the right complexion for protection.

Dismissing the Victims

Dismissing victims is not unusual for this administration and for the EPA. The agency’s new chief, Scott Pruitt, spends his time on the road meeting privately with corporate CEOs responsible for

these toxic waste sites. He then takes their wish-lists back to Washington so he can draft new ways to roll back the environmental protections they loathe.

But local community leaders, with few exceptions, have not been given the opportunity to talk with Pruitt.

Congress passed legislation in 1986 directing EPA to pursue permanent remedies or cleanups that conform to stringent standards. Although permanent cleanups cost more at the front end, they save money over the long term, as evident by the disruption of buried waste from storms like Harvey, Irma, Katrina and Sandy.

So, why won't the EPA enforce the permanent cleanup of these sites to avoid future cleanup costs as well as protect the community?

Because the people who live around most Superfund sites are poor and of color and are considered not worth the investment.

This is even more the case in Puerto Rico, since lawmakers in D.C. feel no accountability to the island's citizens, who are separated from the mainland and denied the right to vote.

The EPA Told Me So

How do I know this? An EPA regional representative recently told me they were not going to spend millions to clean up a site when the surrounding houses are worth \$60,000. It doesn't make cost-effective sense, he said; we'll just try to contain the waste.

Yet these houses are people's homes; inside are human beings raising their families, having backyard picnics and celebrating birthdays. The homes are their American Dream. How dare these government officials devalue their neighborhoods because they are not wealthy!

These families pay taxes, contribute to society and deserve every protection available from our government, regardless of their wealth, language or the color of their skin.

I fear that families that have already lost so much in this summer's severe hurricanes will suffer even more in coming months because of the color of their skin and the level of their income.

And as they try to clean up the mud and debris and rebuild their lives, families must also worry about how much chemical residue is in the mud they and their children have been exposed to.

They Don't Care, So We Must

There is no question in my mind that the Trump Administration does not care for victims, whether in Houston, Miami or San Juan. So we have to take responsibility to compel the administration to act and hold them accountable.

We have to force the government to protect people living near Superfund sites by permanently cleaning them up, and to give Puerto Rico's people the equal treatment they deserve.

Lois Marie Gibbs is a former resident of the Love Canal community and founder of the [Center for Health, Environment and Justice](#), a project of People's Action.

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Hurricanes Present Economic Opportunity For Trump (Forbes)

Oct 16, 2017 @ 12:58 PM 79

Guest post written by Michael Stumo

Stumo is CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America.

[Forbes](#)

Three hurricanes have hit land in the U.S. in the past month, wreaking havoc on the power, transit and communications systems that keep our communities running and our citizens safe. Rebuilding Texas and Florida infrastructure could be a silver lining, putting Americans to work on construction sites and in factories.

But without Trump administration action, many of those jobs will be created in other countries. Foreign trade cheating has weakened many competitive U.S. industries. A new Department of

Commerce report revealed that the U.S. trade deficit in July grew once again. The trade deficit with China increased by 3% to \$33.6 billion, the latest in eleven straight months of increases. Hurricane Harvey's devastation could push the trade deficit even higher if we rebuild using foreign, rather than USA-made goods.

President Trump has a chance to make a difference. On the campaign trail, a pro-American trade agenda galvanized the president's base. Tens of thousands of non-traditional voters were inspired to speak with their ballot. But the White House has delayed assertive action at a time when our country needs jobs to rebuild after these storms. As the CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America, I believe this is precisely the type of risk we try to hedge against by having an "America First" philosophy. Without empowering our own citizens with free and fair economic opportunities, we cannot act as a role model for the rest of the world.

Last April, President Trump announced investigations into imports of steel and aluminum under a trade law known as "Section 232." The results of this investigation would provide an opportunity to fight foreign subsidies with tariffs. Over the past decade, the American steel and aluminum industries have been decimated because the governments of Russia, South Korea, Vietnam, Turkey, China, Brazil and others have subsidized the dumping of products in the U.S.

Thousands of Americans lost their jobs. Since 2000, the U.S. steel industry has lost almost 48,000 jobs, including 14,000 in the last 18 months. The U.S. aluminum industry has lost 3,500 jobs in the past 18 months alone.

Some of President Trump's advisers are doing him and the country a disservice by delaying action. Since calling for the investigation, the White House has postponed the investigation's findings with no clear end in sight. Without follow-through, it's unclear when and how our manufacturing sectors will recover—if ever.

The production of steel and aluminum is critical to our nation's infrastructure and defense needs, especially at a time where we need to rebuild roads, bridges, and buildings destroyed by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Half a million vehicles were severely damaged or destroyed in Hurricane Harvey alone—which is expected to increase demand for steel. According to the Steel Institute's most recent data, U.S. steel mills are operating at just over 70% of capacity. We are just beginning to understand the extent of the economic disruption in the wake of the storms. Sudden, unexpected disasters like these highlight the risk of over dependence on imports. If the steel trade is rebalanced, this could be an opportunity to get these mills back to capacity and get Americans back to work in good paying jobs.

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SOCIAL LISTENING

Hurricane Maria DR-4339-PR – Social Listening Report

Monday, October 16, 2017 1300

Compiled by: Virginia Case, Bree-Constance Huffin, and Savannah Brehmer

Summary: People continue to use social media to locate loved ones, learn about utility restoration – many doubt validity of media and public official reports. In **FEMA**-related conversation, the public is pleased with information about supplies being distributed and help available, but they are not sure what the \$500 they've received is for, and there is criticism for the types of food some have received from **FEMA**. People are especially interested in the USNS Comfort – they're happy about the newborn delivered yesterday, and want to know how to obtain medical services. Efforts are underway to get students back to school and the reactions are mixed. Coast Guard and National Guard recovery efforts are especially appreciated.

Public Perception

FEMA Conversation:

- Individuals who have applied for assistance are [asking questions](#) on what the next steps are, and how they are able to get in contact with officials for a status update on their application.
- Heavy discussion surrounds [a picture](#) of the food FEMA is passing out to survivors continues to circulate and generate conversation.
 - The survivor states (10/13) FEMA is only giving out candy and snacks in their food boxes.
 - There are conflicting comments because some agree that this is what FEMA is really giving out and other survivors are stating they received MREs and canned foods.
 - The Digital Engagement Team is working on content to show what food FEMA is distributing.
- Many are trying to figure out the specifics of the \$500 Critical Needs Assistance money survivors could get from FEMA.
 - The conversation surrounds someone trying to [explain](#) the details of receiving the money based of an interview he had with a FEMA employee.

Public Sentiment:

- People are grateful for the military's help toward Puerto Rico's recovery.
 - Both the content from the National Guard and local media is well-received. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#), [example 3](#))
 - Some are [reacting positively](#) to photos of soldiers passing out water.
- Most are [grateful for their help](#) toward Puerto Rico's recovery. ([example 2](#))
- There are [mixed reviews](#) after Florida Senator Bill Nelson's press conference yesterday.
 - Mostly comments were supportive of the senator and his plans for recovery.
 - Most survivors are ready to see change in their community after the storm.
- The help and visits from local government officials giving back to survivors is receiving a lot of attention through different social media channels.
 - The Governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, visited the emergency Stop & Go of Roosevelt Avenue to check on staff and equipment for disaster assistance registration with FEMA and passed out food to survivors. ([example 1](#) [example 2](#) [example 3](#))
 - The Mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulin Cruz, [visited and talked with survivors](#).
- The USNS Comfort is of great interest to the public. The baby born there yesterday is especially welcome news. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#), [example 3](#)) Many want to know how to get on the ship, and share phone numbers and a graphic with how to get there. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#), [example 3](#)) The Digital Engagement Team is working on a graphic to explain how services on the USNS Comfort can be accessed.
- In a comment posted to David Begnaud's update yesterday on the response, [there's a petition to investigate local corruption at AEE and PREPA](#), though in response others say this has been an issue since before the storm.
- Heavy discussion surrounds [a picture](#) of the food FEMA is passing out to survivors.
- Many people are sharing their gratitude for the celebrities who are raising/donating money to Puerto Rico to assist in the recovery efforts. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#))

- A small amount of individuals are asking how they are able to get their identification cards to travel or what solutions are available for those who want to go to the mainland but have [lost their ID cards](#).
- Individuals who are continuing to look for loved ones in the affected area are being told a resource that has been successful is the CrowdSource Rescue Group. One person has shared a [screenshot of the texts](#) that they received after CrowdSource was able to locate their loved one, and another shares how people are able to get in touch with group and [the information needed](#) for them to be effective.
- News is welcome from the Ponce mayor that [goods are arriving at the port](#) and hot meals are being served.
- Many individuals from outside the affected areas are continuing to share their [frustration](#) about the Federal Government's response to Puerto Rico in [comparison](#) to the [response](#) in Florida and Texas.
-

Operations

Private Sector:

- There's a phone number to call [to request Loads of Love from Tide](#) come to the Island.
- Reports of the maximum individuals should pay for gas continue to circulate. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#))

School:

- Classes are set to resume at the University of Puerto Rico, possibly as soon as in the next week. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#)) Some are skeptical at the news as water and electricity may still not be there.

Communication:

- There have been reports from loved ones outside of the affected area that communications are [coming back on](#) in Aguadilla.
- An individual is sharing information on how survivors may be able to [acquire satellite phones](#) in order to communicate with their families while cell service remains scarce.

Critical Infrastructure/Public Works:

- As of 0700 ET yesterday Whitefish Energy is performing many critical infrastructural updates throughout Puerto Rico.
 - Rebuilding buildings, bridges, power, etc. ([example 1](#) , [example 2](#) , [example 3](#))
 - Those inside and outside the impacted area are glad to see progress happening in Puerto Rico.

Energy:

- As of 1100 ET, 15 October, Power Source and Whitefish was contracted to help bring power and restore the city. ([example 1](#) , [example 2](#))

Life Safety

- Family members are continuing their search for loved ones who have been missing since the Hurricane.
 - San Juan- [Example](#), [Example 2](#)
 - Cayey- [Example](#)
 - Toa Baja- [Example](#)
 - Cain- [Example](#)

- Boqueron- [Example](#)
- Ponce: A person's relative was at the Damas hospital, and they are not able to get more information about him. - [Example](#)

Public Safety:

- As of 1300 EST 10/15: San Juan has been slow to [remove debris](#) from the affected areas, and individuals are expressing their anger towards the mayor for the delay.
- As of 1300 EST 10/15: El Vocero is on the [second phase](#) of debris removal but people are unaware of when the first phase took place.
- As of 2100 EST 10/15: A facility in Isabela that was caring for sick children and adults was [lacking the necessary essentials](#) to keep them alive such as fuel, and air conditioning. As a result, the patients were able to be transferred to a proper medical facility where they were able to receive life-saving care.
- While La Fortaleza de Puerto Rico reports that [water is potable in Tao Alto and Naranjito](#), people are reporting they still don't have access, and others are [skeptical of the report](#).

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Sender:	Arroyo, Maria </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=1457D7C92C7E4172B0C5687D08BF339A-ARROYO, MAR>
Recipient:	"DR-4339-PR All Hands </o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=07089255a82f4e59886f6b742b6e66a0-DR-4339-PR>"
Sent Date:	2017/10/17 07:46:37
Delivered Date:	2017/10/17 07:47:36



FEMA

Media Analysis Report **Puerto Rico - Hurricanes Irma/Maria** **DR-4336/4339-PR**

Monday, October 16, 2017, Evening Edition

Hot Issues:

- ***Following morning report by CNN, AP and Washington Post also report on potentially dangerous water at Dorado and other pollution hazards***
- ***Related, president said today military “shouldn’t have to be’ distributing water, food***

News Clips Analysis / Trends:

- Safe and unsafe drinking water or “environmental crisis” is the overwhelming news trend today, starting with CNN report this morning on residents drinking from polluted source (see AM clips edition), and followed by AP and Washington Post similar stories during the day. The stories heavily reference EPA, and don’t mention **FEMA**
- News coverage blew up this afternoon after the president’s remarks about how the military “shouldn’t have to be” distributing food and water because he believes the local officials should be in charge of it

Survivor News and Quotes:

- “So I would love to stay, and I wanna stay, at least for...I feel like this: I need to help, and I need to be part of this rebuilding. But at the same time, like professionally, it's going to be like devastating like for my career staying here. It's gonna be terrible because it's gonna be one, two years of doing absolutely nothing with my career. So I would have to rethink myself and do something else. I have no problem with it, but, you know, it's a decision I have to make.”— Gabriel Rodriguez, production and creative director at an advertising agency, San Juan resident -- *on Public Radio International*

News Clips Highlights/Summary:

- AP and Washington Post have stories today similar to the CNN report this morning about Puerto Ricans drinking potentially dangerous water. “Residents unwittingly drawing water from a Superfund site is merely one example of Puerto Rico’s dire lack of clean, reliable water,” the Post reports.
- Spanish – Police monitor access to contaminated well
- President Trump said in the Rose Garden today that local officials should be in charge of distributing food and water, not the military

- Spanish - Today's rains caused multiple bridges to be washed out and there have been landslides reported; families cut off
- Public Radio International talks to a handful of Puerto Ricans about their intent to stay and rebuild their lives and communities
- Spanish - Over 5,000 people who lost their homes and now live in temporary shelters throughout the island.
- More coverage of the solar industry's possible role in restoring electrical power to Puerto Rico
- Bacterial infections are a danger and basic medical supplies such as insulin are lacking, Healthline reports
- Spanish - Doctors and employees of the San Juan Municipal Hospital asked the mayor to reopen the emergency room
- Spanish - Officials again publish the names of 113 missing persons last seen as Maria struck
- Half of PR banks are open
- Hurricane refugees from Puerto Rico and other locations who have fled to New York City will have a central office to get help
- Students from Puerto Rico are now being schooled in many locations on the mainland
- Spanish - University Of Puerto Rico reports the institution's damage over \$100 million but that the students will be able to complete their academic courses.
- **Social Media Summary:** People continue to use social media to locate loved ones, learn about utility restoration – many doubt validity of media and public official reports. In **FEMA**-related conversation, the public is pleased with information about supplies being distributed and help available, but they are not sure what the \$500 they've received is for, and there is criticism for the types of food some have received from **FEMA**. People are especially interested in the USNS Comfort – they're happy about the newborn delivered yesterday, and want to know how to obtain medical services. Efforts are underway to get students back to school and the reactions are mixed. Coast Guard and National Guard recovery efforts are especially appreciated.

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WATER / POLLUTION

Puerto Rico struggles with massive environmental crisis (AP)

Michael Melia

Updated 10:25 am, Monday, October 16, 2017

[**Associated Press**](#)



In this Saturday, Oct. 14 2017 photo, people affected by Hurricane Maria collect water and while others bathe in water piped from a mountain creek, in Utuado, Puerto Rico. AP

CAGUAS, Puerto Rico (AP) — Raw sewage is pouring into the rivers and reservoirs of Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. People without running water bathe and wash their clothes in contaminated streams, and some islanders have been drinking water from condemned wells.

Nearly a month after the hurricane made landfall, Puerto Rico is only beginning to come to grips with a massive environmental emergency that has no clear end in sight.

"I think this will be the most challenging environmental response after a hurricane that our country has ever seen," said Judith Enck, who served as administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency region that includes Puerto Rico under President Barack Obama.

With hundreds of thousands of people still without running water, and 20 of the island's 51 sewage treatment plants out of service, there are growing concerns about contamination and disease.

"People in the U.S. can't comprehend the scale and scope of what's needed," said Drew Koslow, an ecologist with the nonprofit Ridge to Reefs who recently spent a week in Puerto Rico working with a portable water treatment system.

EPA officials said that of last week they still had not been unable to inspect five of the island's 18 Superfund sites — highly contaminated toxic sites targeted for cleanup because of risks to human health and the environment — including the former U.S. Navy bombing range on the island of Vieques.

"I just wish we had more resources to deal with it," said Catherine McCabe, the EPA deputy regional administrator.

Puerto Rico has a long history of industrial pollution, and environmental problems have worsened due to neglect during a decade-long economic crisis. A dozen over-packed landfills remain open despite EPA orders to close them because local governments say they don't have the money.

With homes damaged or destroyed, power lines obliterated and traffic chaotic, many of the EPA's own island-based personnel were unable to report for work immediately after the hurricane tore across the island on Sept. 20.

Twelve days after Maria made landfall, the EPA said it had 45 people in Puerto Rico. By Sunday that number stood at 85 — a force that Enck said was still insufficient.

Less than 20 percent of the island's power grid was back online, and while hundreds of large generators have been brought in, the U.S. territory's out-of-service sewage treatments plants include several that sit upstream of drinking water supplies.

One of Puerto Rico's biggest treatment plants discharges into a river that feeds Lake Carraizo, a reservoir that provides drinking water for half of the metropolitan San Juan area. Several of the plant's pumping stations remain out of service due to lack of diesel for generators, leaving sewage running into the lake.

"We're not going anywhere near it," resident Edwin Felix, 46, said, nodding toward the greenish brown river coursing past his hillside home.

That puts an extra strain on the filtration plants that give a final treatment to the water reaching the capital.

Officials say running water has been restored to 72 percent of the island's people. The water authority says it's safe to drink, though the health department still recommends boiling or disinfecting it.

In the town of Juncos on Thursday, EPA personnel warned people who were swimming in a river by an overflowing manhole that it was contaminated by sewage because a pumping station had failed, said Jaime Geliga, chief of the agency's local municipal water program branch.

"That's the only water they get," he said. "That's the difficult part."

Even the island's own water authority has distributed water from some wells at the Dorado Superfund site, according to Gov. Ricardo Rossello, who said that water has been tested and complies with all federal health standards.

But the EPA said Sunday that some people have ignored fences and warning signs and have taken water for drinking from wells on other, more dangerous parts of Dorado, which was brought into the Superfund program due to dangerous levels of industrial chemicals in groundwater.

The agency put up new fences over the weekend and said it had taken samples from those wells, though the results of tests were not yet available.

Islanders also have been urged to avoid drinking or touching surface waters such as lakes or rivers, particularly after a deadly outbreak of suspected leptospirosis, a bacterial disease spread by animals' urine.

The EPA said it plans to dedicate more staff this week to inspect the roughly 250 small water utilities that serve remote, isolated communities and are typically in poor repair.

Many Puerto Ricans fear other existing threats could have grown worse.

In the southern coastal city of Guayama, residents long have protested the dumping of a several-story-high mountain of coal ash on the grounds of nearby power plant. The pile looks intact after the hurricane, but many fear the winds and flooding could have sent coal ash laced with heavy metals into adjacent neighborhoods.

Benjamin Planes Lugo, 70, lost the roof of the house he built with savings from running a gas station in New York, but he said he's more concerned about the ash, which he already blamed for his respiratory problems. The EPA said Sunday that it had visited the site and was awaiting test results.

"We're real worried about it," Planes Lugo said.

Enck, the former EPA administrator who also oversaw the cleanup after Superstorm Sandy in New York and New Jersey, said her successors should pull in staff from all over the country to address Puerto Rico's problems.

"They have to inspect every single landfill," she said. "EPA needs to go and look at how much material has moved offsite because, inevitably, it did."

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Desperate Puerto Ricans line up for water — at a hazardous waste site (Washington Post)

By Arelis R. Hernández and Brady Dennis

October 16 at 2:13 PM

[Washington Post](#)



A man draws water from a well in Puerto Rico that is part of a Superfund site. The area was not secured when federal officials arrived over the weekend to test the water quality of several wells there. Right, workers reattach the fallen "Peligro" sign, for danger, at the Maguayo well in Dorado, where locals who still lack water service after Hurricane Maria were filling containers with potentially contaminated water. (Arelis R. Hernandez/The Washington Post)

DORADO, Puerto Rico — Every 10 minutes or so, a truck or a van pulled up to the exposed spigot of an overgrown well, known as Maguayo #4, that sits not far from a bustling expressway and around the corner from a Krispy Kreme doughnut shop.

Fencing around the area had been torn open, and a red and white "Peligro" sign, warning of danger, lay hidden beneath debris and dense vegetation. One after another, people attached a hose to draw water for bathing, washing dishes and, in some cases, drinking. They filled buckets, jugs, soda bottles.

What many didn't realize is that the well is one of nearly a dozen that are part of the Dorado Groundwater Contamination Superfund site — designated last year by the Environmental Protection Agency as among the nation's most toxic sites.

Past testing here has shown the presence of tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene, solvents commonly used in industrial processes, which can cause health problems including liver damage and increased risk of

cancer. The EPA has yet to identify the cause of groundwater contamination in the wells, and local water systems no longer draw from them.

But the aftermath of Hurricane Maria has brought desperation in many forms. In this corner of the island, many residents still have no reliable source of water and search for access wherever they can.

It's difficult to know just how many people have sought water from the Superfund site in the weeks since the Category 4 hurricane walloped Puerto Rico and crippled its infrastructure. The central water authority continues to depend on generators and some limited electricity-grid power to keep pumps working at plants across the island. As of Sunday, the government announced it had restored service to nearly 70 percent of customers.

But for the families who live in Dorado, nothing is yet flowing in their homes. In a single hour on Saturday, more than four families arrived at the unsecured Maguayo well to draw water. None was aware of the potential dangers. Several assumed the well was part of the "Supertubo" that carries water to greater San Juan, roughly 20 miles to the east.

In the late morning, EPA officials arrived on the scene just as a man and two children were topping off a 50-gallon container on the back of his pickup. Andres, who declined to give his last name, said he had been using the water for bathing and had no idea it might be contaminated.

The dozen officials, armed with kits, gloves and other materials to conduct tests, hastily reassembled the broken chain-link fence near the spigot and restored the "Danger" sign.

Recent local testing showed that contamination levels were below legal thresholds, but EPA spokesman Elias Rodriguez said the agency remains concerned about any residents drinking from wells that are part of the site. Officials said Sunday that data gathered in 2015 showed some wells were contaminated — exceeding standards for volatile organic chemicals — while others met drinking-water standards. The entire area was included in the Superfund site boundaries as a "precautionary measure" because groundwater contamination can move over time, the EPA said.

An agency statement said that the results of the bacteria portion of its testing should be available by midweek and that its chemical analysis should be completed by the end of next week.

Residents unwittingly drawing water from a Superfund site is merely one example of Puerto Rico's dire lack of clean, reliable water. Government officials have said it could be months before power is fully restored across the island, which means that it could take nearly as long to get water flowing to all residents in need. National Guard troops and aid workers only recently began reaching the most far-flung communities with bottled water and water trucks.

The massive disruptions have forced residents to forgo the basics of modern plumbing and resort to any means available to fill containers. Along Highway 10, which cuts a jagged north-south route through the center of Puerto Rico, vehicles frequently line the road shoulders as drivers search for spring water flowing from craggy mountainsides.

In the mountainous municipality of Comerio, flooding from the hurricane left residents cut off from the central government and outside aid. So locals used plastic pipes to install a crude system to reroute spring water to a clearing where, one by one, people could shower. Elsewhere, residents have slogged regularly to creeks to fetch water and to bathe.

EPA officials prepare to test water from a well located on the Dorado Superfund site. Locals have been drawing water from a well there for weeks, not knowing it could be contaminated. (Arelis R. Hernandez/The Washington Post)

With the lack of reliable water has come increasing fear of disease.

Already, the island government has identified four suspected deaths as a result of leptospirosis, a bacterial infection spread by animal urine in the soil or groundwater. The deaths won't be certified as "hurricane-related" unless the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms lab samples indicating the victims became infected by drinking or having contact with contaminated water.

The health risks posed by water from the Maguayo well probably depend on the person, Rodriguez said. Any hazards might be more risky for vulnerable populations, such as elderly people or pregnant women.

[‘If there is no water, disease will come’: Many in Puerto Rico still lack water service]

Another EPA spokesman, Rusty Harris-Bishop, said government officials only recently learned that people were trying to get water at Superfund sites. In one case, a local resident contacted the agency to request access to a well.

Harris-Bishop said the EPA began sending assessment teams late last week to evaluate hazardous waste sites in Dorado, Hormigas and San German. After surveying those locations and two others, the agency says it believes residents were able to access wells only at the Dorado site, although officials acknowledge they have no way of knowing how many people carted away water before the site was again secured Saturday.

The EPA is working with the Federal Emergency Management Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure water trucks are reaching nearby neighborhoods. “We are sensitive to the suffering and needs of these communities,” Harris-Bishop said.

Dennis reported from Washington.

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Policía dará vigilancia a supuesto pozo contaminado en Dorado | Hospital (Metro PR)

[Cybernews](#)

lunes 16 de octubre del 2017, a las 13:38

Police will monitor well number 4 of the Aqueducts and Sewers Authority (AAA) in Macoolo, Dorado, which is supposedly contaminated.

La Policía le dará vigilancia al pozo número 4 de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AAA) en Maguayo, Dorado, el cual supuestamente está contaminado.

Según el reporte, una persona abrió la llave y varios ciudadanos se llevaron a sus casas el agua supuestamente contaminada.

El pozo en cuestión ubica en la carretera PR-694 kilómetro 2.3 del barrio Maguayo en Dorado.

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Trump says military should not have to help with food, water distribution in Puerto Rico (CNBC)

- The military is helping distribute water and food in Puerto Rico, but President Trump says that's "something that really they shouldn't have to be doing."
- The U.S. territory has been reeling in the wake of Hurricane Maria, which left most of the island without power or access to clean drinking water.
- Trump has faced criticism for an apparent lack of empathy amid the disaster response.

By Christine Wang

3:52 p.m. Oct. 16, 2017

[CNBC](#)

President Donald Trump said the military shouldn't have to distribute the "massive amounts" of food and water that have been delivered to storm-battered Puerto Rico.

When a reporter asked Trump about disaster relief on the island, the president said that food and water had been brought to Puerto Rico, but it wasn't being distributed by local people.

"They have to distribute the food to the people of the island. So, what we've done is, we now actually have military distributing food, something that really they shouldn't have to be doing," he said in a wide-ranging, hastily scheduled press conference on Monday.

The remark follows comments Trump made last week, where he partly blamed the island for the devastation and said emergency responders can't stay in Puerto Rico "forever."

Puerto Rico has been reeling in the wake of Hurricane Maria, which left most of the U.S. territory without power or access to clean drinking water. Over the weekend, local authorities raised the death toll to 48 after reviewing medical records.

A local economist projected that the wreckage may have set back Puerto Rico's economy so much that it will now take more than a decade to recover.

Trump said Monday that aid operations in Puerto Rico are "very tough" because the island "was in very poor shape before the hurricanes ever hit." The island had more than \$70 million in debt before Maria landed.

The president has faced criticism for an apparent lack of empathy for Puerto Rico amid the disaster response.

During a trip to the island earlier this month, Trump said the hurricane destruction had thrown his administration's budget "a little out of whack." Later that day, he tossed packages of paper towels to hurricane victims.

While Trump has said his administration has done a great job responding to the crisis on the island, a recent poll found that most voters disagreed. Fifty-five percent of American voters say the Trump administration has not done enough to help the U.S. territory after Hurricane Maria struck, according to a Quinnipiac poll released last week.

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Trump blames difficulty accessing water in Puerto Rico on local distribution (CNN)

US has brought 'tremendous amounts of water'

By Eli Watkins , CNN

Posted: 2:23 PM, October 16, 2017 Updated: 2:35 PM, October 16, 2017

[CNN](#)

Puerto Rico is suffering shortages of water in many areas and only 15 percent of grid electricity has been restored.

WASHINGTON (CNN) - President Donald Trump defended the federal government's response to the disaster in Puerto Rico, and contended difficulty accessing food and water was due to shortcomings on local distribution.

"We have delivered tremendous amounts of water, and then what you have to do is you have to have distribution of the water by the people on the island," Trump said at a news conference on Monday from the White House.

Trump noted the military is on the ground helping with distribution efforts -- which he argued shouldn't be their job.

"What we've done is we now actually have military distributing food, something that really they shouldn't have to be doing," Trump said.

He said there are plenty of supplies in Puerto Rico, but the local distribution chains need to work to get them where they are needed.

"We have massive amounts of water," Trump said. "We have massive amounts of food, but they have to distribute the food, and they have to do this. They have to distribute the food to the people of the island."

Trump said the situation was "very tough" because Puerto Rico is an island and had a poor electrical grid prior to being hit by back-to-back hurricanes.

"It was in really bad shape before," Trump said.

The entire island of Puerto Rico was walloped by hurricanes last month, and the population of more than 3 million U.S. citizens continues to struggle with the fallout. The House passed a package of relief funding last week, but much of the island remains without power -- and access to clean water continues to be lacking.

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Trump: Military 'shouldn't have to be' distributing food in Puerto Rico (Politico)

By Cristiano Lima

10/16/2017 03:39 PM EDT

[Politico](#)

More on this:

- **Transcript of president's statements on various topics, including Puerto Rico at [TIME.com](#)**
- **Key Moments from President's Wide Ranging News Conference, [ABC.com](#)**
- **Also no [FOX News](#) and [PBS](#)**

President Donald Trump said military personnel assisting in Hurricane Maria recovery efforts "shouldn't have to be" distributing food in Puerto Rico, again casting the U.S. territory's challenges as partially self-inflicted during a Monday press conference.

The president said that while federal agencies have provided "massive" amounts of food and water to Puerto Rico — where access to resources and power remains severely hampered by last month's storm — they should not also be expected to distribute them. Trump has previously said Puerto Ricans relied too much on federal government resources instead of a "community effort" to rebuild.

"We have massive amounts of water. We have massive amounts of food," Trump said at the White House, where he spoke alongside Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. "But they have to distribute the food."

Trump added: "We now actually have military distributing food — something that, really, they shouldn't have to be doing."

The president has singled out issues with infrastructure and other challenges in Puerto Rico that he said predated the storm as hurdles in the path to recovery. He has also warned that he won't leave federal employees in Puerto Rico indefinitely.

"We cannot keep **FEMA**, the Military & the First Responders, who have been amazing (under the most difficult circumstances) in P.R. forever!" he tweeted.

The House of Representatives on Thursday overwhelmingly approved a \$36.5 billion relief package for Puerto Rico and other impacted regions. It is headed to the Senate, where it is expected to be approved.

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WEATHER

Piden abrir la Sala de Emergencias del Hospital Municipal de San Juan (Primera Hora)

[Primerahora.com](#)

10/16/2017 |09:14 a.m.

Due the weather conditions, a bridge in Cidra collapsed this morning. Ten families were left incommunicado, the police added

Un puente localizado en la carretera PR-734 del sector Campo Bello en Cidra colapsó durante la mañana de hoy, lunes, informó la Policía.

Según datos preliminares, los hechos ocurrieron a las 8:00 a.m. cuando el puente se derrumbó debido a las inclemencias del tiempo.

Diez familias quedaron incommunicadas, agrega la querrela del Centro de Operaciones de Radio Control.

No se reportaron heridos

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Todo Puerto Rico bajo vigilancia de inundaciones (Primera Hora)

10/16/2017 |09:19 a.m.

Primerahora.com

The National Meteorology Service (SNM) maintains a flood watch for all of Puerto Rico until midnight today, due to the rains that continue to whip the island. Downpours will be impacting mostly the eastern region of the island and during the afternoon will be extended to other portions of the island. Due to the saturation of the soils, it is warned that any rain can cause flooding in several municipalities

El Servicio Nacional de Meteorología (SNM) mantiene una vigilancia de inundaciones para todo Puerto Rico hasta la medianoche de hoy, debido a las lluvias que continúan azotando la isla.

Según el meteorólogo Jesús Figueroa, del SNM, aunque la onda tropical que afectó ayer parte de la isla se encuentra bastante lejos detrás de este fenómeno atmosférico hay áreas extensas de humedad que están propiciando el desarrollo de aguaceros y tormentas eléctricas en varios sectores de la isla.

Estos aguaceros estarán impactando hoy la región este de la isla y durante la tarde se extenderán a otras porciones del país.

Como los suelos continúan saturados, Figueroa advirtió que cualquier lluvia adicional podrá ocasionar inundaciones en varios pueblos.

"Va a seguir lloviendo y cualquier lluvia adicional se convierte en escorrentías, lo que causa problemas de inundaciones", expuso el meteorólogo.

De hecho, debido al paso de la onda tropical ayer se registraron de dos a cuatro pulgadas de lluvia, mayormente en la mitad este y sureste del país. En el municipio de San Lorenzo, por ejemplo, se registraron 4.32 pulgadas de agua.

Figueroa indicó que el SNM también mantiene un aviso de inundaciones para el municipio Yabucoa hasta las 9:30 a.m. de hoy, ya que el río Guayanés se encuentra en un nivel bastante alto.

"Aunque el río está bajando sigue sobre el nivel de inundaciones. Se espera que en las próximas horas el nivel baje", manifestó el meteorólogo.

Ante estas condiciones del tiempo, el mar está bastante picado con olas de hasta ocho pies, por lo que hay una advertencia para los operadores de pequeñas embarcaciones.

Además, hay un potencial moderado de corrientes submarinas para la costa norte y sur de Puerto Rico.

Figueroa sostuvo que esta actividad de lluvias y tronadas continuará, al menos, hasta este jueves, ya que para el fin de semana se espera que un patrón de aire seco entre a nuestra región, mejorando las condiciones del tiempo.

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Colapsan dos puentes en Bayamón y Cidra ospital Municipal de San Juan (El Nuevo Día)

lunes, 16 de octubre de 2017 - 1:45 PM

[El Nuevo Dia](#)

Two bridges collapsed today, one in the municipality of Bayamón and another in the municipality of Cidra due to the heavy rains that continue to affect the island.

Dos puentes colapsaron hoy, uno en el municipio de Bayamón y otro en el municipio de Cidra debido a las fuertes lluvias que continúan afectando la isla.

Según la Oficina de Prensa de la Policía, uno de los derrumbes ocurrió en la carretera PR-830 del barrio Cerro Gordo en Bayamón, impidiendo el paso de los conductores.

El tránsito se interrumpió a la altura del kilómetro 23, agregó la Uniformada.

Asimismo, un puente ubicado en la carretera PR-734 del sector Campo Bello en Cidra colapsó durante la mañana de hoy.

Según datos preliminares, los hechos ocurrieron a las 8:00 a.m. cuando el puente se derrumbó debido a las inclemencias del tiempo.

Diez familias quedaron incomunicadas, agrega la querrela del Centro de Operaciones de Radio Control.
No se reportaron heridos.

Piden abrir la Sala de Emergencias del Hospital Municipal de San Juan

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Se registran deslizamientos de tierra en Caguas y Aguas Buenas (Primera Hora)

10/16/2017 |01:31 p.m.

Primera Hora

The authorities reported on two landslides that obstruct the roads of Caguas and Aguas Buenas. Emergency management personnel from both municipalities attend to the situation.

Las autoridades informaron sobre dos deslizamientos de terreno que obstruyen carreteras de Caguas y Aguas Buenas.

Según la Policía a media mañana de hoy, lunes, ocurrió un deslizamiento de tierra en la carretera PR-798 a la altura del kilómetro 1.7 en el barrio Río Cañas de Caguas.

El segundo deslizamiento se reportó en la carretera PR-173 en jurisdicción del sector La Mula en el barrio Jagüeyes de Aguas Buenas un tramo quedó intransitable.

Personal de Manejo de Emergencias de ambos municipios atienden la situación.

De otro lado, la Policía indicó que hay un río fuera de su cauce en el sector Los Reyes en Caguas, por lo que se recomendó a los conductores a tomar vías alternas.

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Investigan al Municipio de Patillas por manejo de suministros (Primera Hora)

Gloria Ruiz Kuilan 10/16/2017 |02:29 p.m.

Primera Hora

The authorities reported on two landslides that obstruct the roads of Caguas and Aguas Buenas. Emergency management personnel from both municipalities attend to the situation.

El Departamento de Justicia comenzó hoy una investigación contra el Municipio de Patillas luego de que en una inspección realizada hoy se encontraran, supuestamente, alimentos y agua provista por la Agencia federal de Manejo de Emergencias (**FEMA**, por sus siglas en inglés) tirada en un contenedor destinado para la basura, informó hoy lunes la secretaria de Justicia, Wanda Vázquez.

“Encontramos suministros tirados en una carpa que cuando empezó a llover no se guardaron. Aquí se asignó un fiscal y un agente de la policía para que hagan un inventario porque el problema es que hay personas que dicen que vieron ratas allí. Por lo tanto, muy probablemente toda esa mercancía haya que decomisarla”, dijo la secretaria.

Dijo que visitaron el centro de acopio del Municipio de Patillas tras recibir esta mañana una querrela alertando sobre el supuesto mal manejo de la ayuda de **FEMA**.

“Esto lo que amerita es que el Departamento de Justicia verifique todos los centros de acopio”, afirmó Vázquez.

La secretaria recordó que el gobernador Ricardo Rosselló dio la directriz la semana pasada de investigar cómo se estaban manejando los suministros ante las incesantes quejas de alcaldes y personas afectadas por el huracán de que la ayuda les llegaba tarde o era escasa.

“Hay funcionarios que no están entregando los suministros tan pronto los reciben”, abundó la secretaria de Justicia.

Dijo que al dejarle saber al alcalde de Patillas, Norberto Soto Figueroa, que se comenzaría una investigación, este dijo que “como llovió pues...”.

No fue posible conseguir al alcalde a través de su celular.

Vázquez indicó que todo funcionario que se halle incurso en mal manejo de estos suministros o los retenga se expone a negligencia en el cumplimiento del deber.

“De igual manera, siendo propiedad federal se va a referir para investigación del FBI y se puede exponer a una pena de hasta 20 años”, sostuvo Vázquez.

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POWER / INFRASTRUCTURE / COMMUNICATIONS

Solar Industry Sees the Opportunity to Build Puerto Rico's Grid of the Future (Bloomberg)

The island is focused on restoring power as quickly as possible, but it can't ignore the chance to rethink its entire energy grid.

By Naureen S Malik and Brian Eckhouse

October 16, 2017, 2:38 PM GMT-4

[Bloomberg](#)

It began with a question posed by Richard Birt, a Las Vegas Fire & Rescue captain: What do you need?

The answer for the San Juan fire house was simple enough: electricity. It's what much of Puerto Rico has needed since Hurricane Maria tore through the commonwealth more than three weeks ago, laying waste to an already weak grid. Without power, basic logistics such as coordinating and transporting equipment had proven insurmountable.

At the station in Barrio Obrero—Spanish for “workers’ neighborhood”—the situation was dire. A single diesel generator failed at times thanks to contaminated fuel. Firefighters were mostly working in darkness, relying on word-of-mouth to serve the mounting needs of a low-income community. “There are more incidents because people are using hibachis, generators and candles,” said Francisco Cruz, a lieutenant with the San Juan fire department. Nearby, a large tree covered in electrical wires blocked a main road to the station, which helps serve the city’s airport.

Sunrun brought over smaller solar panels with batteries to power water desalination tanks, left. Firefighters and Sunrun employees install panels on the roof of the Barrio Obrero fire station in San Juan to set up a microgrid to keep the lights and communications equipment running.

Birt suggested a micro-grid featuring solar and battery storage and began mobilizing a team to help put it all together. Funding for the project was provided by Empowered by Light (a group backed by Leonardo DiCaprio), rooftop company Sunrun Inc. (which also donated the solar panels), and GivePower, a nonprofit that specializes in solar installation in conflict regions.

The solar industry has taken particular interest in San Juan in the aftermath of the hurricane. It's primarily a humanitarian effort for these companies, but it's also a chance to showcase an energy source capable of enduring natural disasters. Tesla Inc. is sending its Powerwall battery systems, Sunrun has pledged more than 8,000 pounds of solar products and rooftop company Vivint Solar Inc. is helping with shipments. The Solar Energy Industries Association has received pledges for more than \$1.2 million in product and monetary contributions from its network.

A week and a half after Birt's initial outreach, a plane arrived in San Juan carrying enough solar panels and batteries to install 18.4 kilowatts worth of systems. The installations in Barrio Obrero were completed two days later, about 13 hours after President Donald Trump, who has noted the commonwealth's long-standing financial and electrical woes, tweeted: “We cannot keep **FEMA**, the Military & the First Responders, who have been amazing (under the most difficult circumstances) in P.R. forever!”

Some hope the crisis will spur greater energy self-reliance. “We should be more flexible, to allow regions to have their own systems,” said Marco Antonio Rigau, president of San Juan's city council, in an interview. “We are not using solar energy completely.”

“We put solar on the roof because the sun comes up every day,” Birt said, who himself has lived off the grid using solar and batteries for more than a dozen years. “It's not going to run out of diesel like a generator or

have a problem. The sun comes up, it charges the battery and the batteries are full every day waiting for the power to go down.”

Sunrun is using these charitable installations, that will allow the firehouses to produce their own power for lights and communications equipment, as a test for setting up more microgrids around the island, said Chris Rauscher, director of public policy for the company.

Providing storage is crucial at this point; solar panels alone can't provide round-the-clock power. With the grid down, existing panels atop Puerto Rico homes and Wal-Mart Stores Inc. stores that are affiliated with utility Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, or Prepa, have failed to operate.

Houston-based Sunnova Energy Corp., which has 10,000 residential customers in Puerto Rico who depend on Prepa, is asking battery providers to send shipments to the island on the expectation that restrictions preventing their use will be eliminated. Chief Executive Officer John Berger said he met last week with Governor Ricardo Rossello for assistance “to cut the red tape to allow those batteries to come in and allow our customers to have power.”

But for now, logistics remain a problem. Because of limited cargo space, some goods are being sent to a Miami warehouse. “We are going to continue to solicit donations and try to arrange transportation,” said SEIA spokesman Dan Whitten in an email.

Getting the power back on is the current priority, Governor Ricardo Rosello told a Bloomberg News reporter in San Juan on Friday, but more thought must be given to the future of the energy grid. (He has already held an “initial conversation” with Elon Musk on the subject, he recently tweeted.) The island must “give ourselves an opportunity to not just rebuild the old system but rather to establish a platform so that we can consider microgrids” and other uses of renewable sources, he said.

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HEALTH / DEATHS / ENVIRONMENTAL

Bacterial Infections the Latest Health Issue to Hit Puerto Rico (Healthline)

Written by Gigen Mammoser

October 16, 2017

Fact Checked

[Healthline](#)

The hurricane-ravaged island is struggling with a variety of health problems caused by contaminated water, power outages, and a lack of medical supplies.

Hurricane Maria is long gone.

But Puerto Rico is still struggling to overcome a growing healthcare crisis.

So far, 48 deaths have been attributed to the hurricane since it made landfall on Sept. 20.

And that number appears to be growing almost by the day.

More than 100 people are still missing.

Plus, a bacterial infection caused by contaminated water is starting to spread across the island territory.

Damage to major infrastructure, including roads and electrical facilities, has also created new challenges as well.

Basic medical supplies are sorely needed.

“The initial and the ongoing need right now that has come up over and over again is the medications needed to manage chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension,” said Danielle Butin, founder of the Afya Foundation, a New York-based organization that distributes surplus medical supplies and humanitarian provisions for healthcare crises around the world.

Afya has so far delivered more than 3,000 vials of insulin as part of 10 airlifts of medication and supplies to Puerto Rico valued at more than \$1.7 million in the past weeks.

Access and supplies

Outside the capital and metropolitan center of San Juan, access to healthcare and the ability to deliver supplies has become increasingly difficult.

“There has been really, really poor coordination and distribution of medical supplies and medical care in the rural areas,” Butin told Healthline.

She said their next focus will be to help supply nursing homes with basic supplies, including diapers for elderly and frail patients.

Elderly patients and those with chronic illnesses that require ongoing treatment, such as dialysis, are particularly at risk because of the hurricane’s damage to Puerto Rico’s electrical grid.

In Florida, 14 elderly nursing home patients died after their care center lost power when Hurricane Irma hit the state in early September.

No power, no water

In Puerto Rico, there’s an urgency to get adequate generators supplied with fuel to keep hospitals up and running.

“There are people who require generators for life-sustaining measures,” said Butin. “They require electricity to run medical machinery and there aren’t enough generators operating. There aren’t enough generators to distribute for what’s needed at this point.”

An estimated 84 percent of Puerto Rico is still without power.

Reuters reported that in some instances, fuel for hospital generators has been delivered by armed guards to protect against looting.

Fresh water is also an ongoing problem that has led to an increase in bacterial infections. Forty percent of the population is believed to still be without running water.

Leptospirosis, a disease that can be spread by animal urine and flood waters is being investigated as the cause of four deaths so far.

The disease can cause kidney damage, meningitis, and respiratory disorders.

“People are drinking out of creeks that are incredibly problematic. Water access and treated waters is a huge issue,” said Butin.

Drinking from a stream is believed to have caused at least one of the cases of leptospirosis.

The spread of contaminated water either through flooding or from drinking from a polluted source also increases the risk of other serious diseases, including cholera and hepatitis.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye), caused by fecal matter, has seen an uptick on the island.

“Conjunctivitis is everywhere, so now they are in need of medicated eye drops,” said Butin.

A worried population

Beyond the acute and immediate medical needs on the island, there’s also a specter of despair brought on by the near constant back and forth between the island’s leadership and President Trump.

The president’s public comments have done little to calm the fears of those in Puerto Rico.

His statement last Thursday that federal workers may leave the island soon added to those worries.

“They are really scared there,” said Butin. “People are worried about where they are going to get their medication. People are worried about getting sick.”

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Piden abrir la Sala de Emergencias del Hospital Municipal de San Juan (El Nuevo Dia)

lunes, 16 de octubre de 2017 - 5:00 AM

[El Nuevo Dia](#)

A group of doctors and employees of the San Juan Municipal Hospital asked the capital’s mayor, Carmen Yulín Cruz, to reopen the emergency room of that health center, which

was closed after the passage of Hurricane Irma by Puerto Rico. The San Juan Mayor stated that hospital facilities will remain close up to the rest of the Hurricane Season

Un grupo de médicos y empleados del Hospital Municipal de San Juan le solicitaron a la alcaldesa de la capital, Carmen Yulín Cruz, que reabra la Sala de Emergencias de ese centro de salud, la que fue cerrada luego del paso del huracán Irma por Puerto Rico.

"Durante el paso del Huracán Irma una de las plantas eléctricas destinada a la Sala de Emergencias se dañó y la Alcaldesa mando a cerrar la Sala de Emergencias de Adultos y Pediátrica y aún no ha querido abrirla por mero capricho", dijo anoche a endi.com un médico que pidió que no se le identificara.

El Hospital Municipal de San Juan, que ubica en el Centro Médico de Río Piedras, es a donde los médicos de las Salas de Emergencias de los Centros de Diagnóstico y Tratamiento de la capital refieren a los pacientes que necesitan cuidado clínico de nivel terciario.

Además, ese hospital atiende a pacientes que llegan a la Sala de Emergencias. El médico que habló con endi.com dijo que tanto la Sala de Emergencias para adultos como la pediátrica están cerradas y que solo se mantiene abierta la de OBGYN o partos.

"(Cruz) le prestó una planta eléctrica a la Alcaldesa de Loíza, teniendo nuestro hospital la necesidad. Este reclamo ya le costó el puesto al director médico. Es por eso que hablamos a condición de que no se nos identifique", dijo la fuente.

"Nos hemos comunicado con la Alcaldesa por diferentes vías y su posición es que no va a abrir hasta que culmine la temporada de huracanes", afirmó el galeno.

"Esto pone en riesgo la vida de cientos de pacientes que necesitan de nuestro cuidado. Así que hacemos un llamado al Secretario de Salud y la Procuradora de Paciente y del Envejeciente para que intervengan" con la Cruz.

Por su parte, un médico residente alertó sobre las consecuencias de tener la Sala de Emergencias cerrada. "Vamos a perder la acreditación de la Comisión Conjunta de Hospitales que nos permite atender pacientes de Medicare. También perderemos la acreditación de los programa de residencia médicas", expresó.

La Sala de Emergencias municipal tiene 50 camillas y el hospital tiene licencia para 300 camas. La plantilla de empleados es de más de 700 personas.

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113 personas continúan desaparecidas tras el paso del huracán María (El Nuevo Día)

lunes, 16 de octubre de 2017 - 12:35 PM

[El Nuevo Día](#)

A list of 113 people lost are offered by state police from 13 Municipalities. Family reported last see them on September 20, after Maria hurricane

Son hijos, hijas, hermanas, primos, nietas, padres, madres, abuelos... 113 puertorriqueños, 113 seres queridos, que fueron vistos por última vez el 20 de septiembre de 2017, durante el azote el huracán María.

A continuación, la lista de nombres por zona policiaca, suministrada por el Departamento de Seguridad Pública. El listado fue actualizado por última vez el domingo 15 de octubre.

Área policiaca: Aguadilla

1. Rodolfo Agrelot Segui
2. Yarilín Vélez González
3. Edwin Santos Méndez
4. Alberto Aldarondo Segui
5. Wandalina Fonseca
6. Celestino González Cruz
7. Antonio L. García Berrios
8. Glorimar Crespo Mejías

9. María Isabel López Ramírez
10. Ramón Nieves Matos
11. Dayan Gerena Matías
12. Jenifer Román
13. Nakia Román
14. Dayanara Ortiz
15. Marcos Cortés Rivera
16. Nericelena Caro Echevarrías
17. Joel Omar Rivera Benítez
18. Wilfredo Sánchez Valentín
19. Rodolfo Angueira Segui

Área policiaca: Aibonito

20. José Rivera Rodríguez
21. José A. Mendoza Pérez
22. Emmanuel Rodríguez Robles

Área policiaca: Arecibo

23. Luis Ortiz González
24. Daniel Onil Acevedo
25. Sheila García Rodríguez
26. Juan Olmo Cortés
27. Jessinette Rosa Hernández
28. Manuel Cruz Rodríguez

Área policiaca: Bayamón

29. Elina S. León Meléndez
30. Sheila Jaime Lugo Lirazno
31. Ivelisse Claudio
32. Benny Flores Cruz
33. Yadiriz Vázquez Nater
34. José A. Mercado Martínez
35. Orlando Rivera Camacho
36. Luis R. Matos González
37. Emmanuel Ortiz Rodríguez
38. Lester Rivera Martínez

Área policiaca: Caguas

39. Kenneth Jiménez Tayson
40. Martha Carrasquillo Ferrer
41. Álex J. Medina Vega
42. José L. Pabón del Valle
43. María Montes Hernández
44. Stephania Robles Rodríguez
45. Jean P. Velázquez Rosario
46. Miguel González Sánchez
47. Nelly Alicea Guzmán
48. Janelisse Castro Cruz
49. Joeluis A. Pabón del Valle

50. Luis Medina Díaz
51. Vidal A. Amrao Alicea
52. José M. Jiménez Hernández
53. Adam David Torres Félix
54. Yampier González Félix
55. Nilda Ferrer Díaz
56. Ángel L. Jiménez
57. Miriam I. Santos Escribano
58. José Osorio Suárez
59. Álex Morales Álamo
60. Emmanuel Montañez Ojeda

Área policiaca: Carolina

61. Benjamín Pizarro Díaz
62. Nelson J. Martínez Rivera
63. Luis A. Escobar García
64. Johany Benítez Collazo
65. Jesús M. Betancourt Cedres
66. Julio Ayuso Rivera
67. Javier Omar Soto Hiraldo
68. Josean Omar Soto Hiraldo
69. Juan Guerrero Figueroa

Área policiaca: Fajardo

70. Rubén Quiñones Segarra
71. Francisco García Pérez
72. Yarelis Santiago Martínez
73. Fernando Omar Cruz Rivera
74. William Fernández Rodríguez

Área policiaca: Guayama

75. Gilberto Rivera López
76. Irving Díaz Viñas
77. John Jr. Díaz Torres
78. Luis Reinaldo Fonseca
79. Juan A. Olmo Cortez
80. Misael Ocasio Vázquez

Área policiaca: Humacao

81. Raúl López Cay

Área policiaca: Mayagüez

82. Luis Cintrón Goden
83. Luis Matías
84. Carlos Flores Torres
85. Marilyn Luciano Rivera
86. Zenaida Martínez
87. Luis Negrón Ramírez
88. José A. Zapata Ramírez

89. Miriam I. Cabán Bermúdez
90. Angeli Luis Morales Rodríguez
91. Henry Ramos Camacho

Área policiaca: Ponce

92. Maritza Rivera Colón
93. Neisha Robles Lee
94. Roberto Maldonado Figueroa
95. Santos Salcedo
96. Ernesto de Jesús Echevarría
97. Juliet Yarelis Torres Martínez
98. Ezequiel Cardona Albarrán
99. Alexandra Pañño Rivera
100. Melanie Dávila Meléndez
101. Alvin Manuel Rivera López

Área policiaca: San Juan

102. Daniel José García Ortiz
103. Delia Boria Quiñones
104. Raúl Cepeda Ortiz
105. Harrison Isaac Sánchez Berrios
106. Keyslyann Rivera Burgos
107. Víctor Manuel de León Marengo
108. Aleysha Sánchez Delgado
109. Jamal Velázquez Díaz

Área policiaca: Utuado

110. Minerva Pérez Santiago
111. Miguel A. Santiago Santos
112. Juan Caraballo Cruz
113. Juan Vázquez Montañez

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BUSINESS

A month after hurricane, only half of Puerto Rico's banks are open (CNN)

'The lines are endless'

By Patrick Gillespie

Posted: 9:20 AM, October 16, 2017 Updated: 9:39 AM, October 16, 2017

[CNN](#)

NEW YORK (CNMoney) - Half the banks in Puerto Rico are still closed, almost a month after Hurricane Maria.

For weeks, Puerto Ricans have been waiting in long lines to get cash, food, water and gas. But banks have had a harder time reopening than other stores.

Nearly 80% of gas stations are open, and 86% of supermarkets. But only 157 of 314 bank branches on the island are open, according to government figures. About 870 ATMs are working, but the government can't say how many were working before the storm.

Most businesses are still without power and are only accepting cash. The island isn't low on bills: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in September that two "giant" cash shipments had been sent. But the devastated electric grid, poor cell service and other problems make it difficult to safely coordinate deliveries of money.

"When the telecommunication is down and the energy is down in most of the places, then you're going to have to do a cash-based economy," Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello told CNNMoney earlier this month.

One complication has been finding enough drivers to deliver the cash in armored trucks. Another is finding gas. And the lack of power makes it hard for banks to bring software security systems back online.

Progress is being made. Two weeks ago, only 40% of banks were open. But the long wait is still too much for many people.

"The lines are endless," says Cely Rivera, a 37-year-old mother of two in Guayanilla, on the southern coast. "There isn't any communication."

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SURVIVOR' STORIES

We asked Puerto Ricans about their future plans. Many want to stay and rebuild. (PRI)

Hear directly from some of them, below.

PRI's The World

Oct. 16, 2017 · 9:00 AM EDT

By Jasmine Garsd and Andrea Crossan

[Public Radio International](#)

As some Puerto Ricans fill flights to Miami, we asked a handful of people in San Juan their thoughts about leaving their homes for the mainland US. About 3.4 million people live in Puerto Rico, and some will choose to leave the island behind and move permanently.

The House passed a \$36.5 billion aid package last week and on Sunday, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricard Rosselló said he expected power to be restored to 95 percent of the island's electric grid by Dec. 15. Currently, 85 percent of the island is still without electricity.

Most of the people we spoke to responded that they would not leave their families behind but planned to stay and rebuild.

"I'm going to lose people that I have known."

"I do have quite a few neighbors that have already gone to Miami, which is where most of them are leaving to. And a lot of them already bought their trip, their one-way trip to Miami and they're just waiting, and the flights have been cancelled. I feel sorry that I'm going to lose people that...that I have known."— Yolanda Prosper, teacher, San Juan resident

"I need to help, and I need to be part of this rebuilding."

"So I would love to stay, and I wanna stay, at least for...I feel like this: I need to help, and I need to be part of this rebuilding. But at the same time, like professionally, it's going to be like devastating like for my career staying here. It's gonna be terrible because it's gonna be one, two years of doing absolutely nothing with my career. So I would have to rethink myself and do something else. I have no problem with it, but, you know, it's a decision I have to make."— Gabriel Rodriguez, production and creative director at an advertising agency, San Juan resident

"... it's very shocking to see how my island is right now."

"I never lived in the United States, so I stay. And for me, it's very shocking for me to see how my island is right now." — Maria Olivero, acting public affairs officer at VA Caribbean Healthcare System

"... I can leave no one behind."

"My kids are here, my family, everybody else, so I can leave no one behind. You know, I need to help them. Still it's going to be a sucky part of it, but I gotta do it."— César Gutiérrez, Marine Corps veteran, San Juan resident

Produced by Alex Newman; edited by Anna Pratt. Reporting and images by Jasmine Garsd and Andrea Crossan in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lead image by Carlos Barria/Reuters.

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A casi un mes de María, aún hay 5,000 refugiados (Primera Hora)

Prensa Asociada

10/16/2017 |07:06 a.m.

[Primera Hora](#)

Over 5,000 people who lost their homes and now live in temporary shelters throughout the island. The 85% of the island remains without power electricity and about 40% do not have access to water for the last three weeks, since hurricane Maria

TOA BAJA, Puerto Rico. Arden Dragoni y su familia perdieron todo cuando el huracán María devastó Puerto Rico el mes pasado. Sólo algunas paredes de su casa de madera siguen en pie. Su ropa, muebles, otros bienes del hogar y su viejo automóvil están en ruinas.

Dragoni, su esposa Sindy, sus tres hijos y su perro Max viven ahora en un albergue establecido dentro de una escuela en este pueblo en la costa norte de Puerto Rico. Él mantenía a su familia como trabajador de la construcción, pero su empleador cerró el negocio, por lo que Dragoni se quedó sin una fuente de ingresos.

Están entre las más de 5,000 personas que perdieron sus viviendas y ahora viven en albergues temporales en toda la isla, donde cerca el 85% de la isla sigue sin suministro eléctrico del Estado y cerca del 40% carece de acceso regular de agua tres semanas después del paso de la tormenta.

La mayoría de la gente que está en los albergues perdió su vivienda por inundaciones, que fueron especialmente intensas en comunidades tales como Toa Baja. Las casas y los apartamentos se llenaron de aguas turbias, las cuales se llevaron los electrodomésticos y destruyeron todo lo que había en el interior.

En la escuela Ernestina Bracero Pérez en Toa Baja hay 73 personas de todas las edades que duermen en los salones de clase, se bañan con agua de lluvia y pasan el tiempo en el patio.

La familia de Dragoni comparte espacio con otra familia en un salón de clases en la escuela.

La pareja llevó a su hijo Ian al hospital después de que le salió una ampolla detrás de la oreja, ya que el agua contaminada ha estado provocando enfermedades en algunas personas, pero el doctor lo diagnosticó como un salpullido común.

Agustina Lugo, una anciana de salud delicada, también se refugió en la escuela después de que la tormenta del 20 de septiembre inundó su casa. Dijo que no había tenido contacto con sus parientes hasta que una sobrina la localizó recientemente.

Las autoridades escolares dicen que la escuela no puede reabrir hasta que las víctimas desplazadas por las inundaciones puedan retirarse de ella. Las autoridades locales intentan hallarles un nuevo albergue en el poblado.

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EDUCATION

Estimados de UPR superan los \$100 millones en daños (Primera Hora)

10/16/2017 |01:32 p.m.

Alex Figueroa Cancel

[Primera Hora](#)

University Of Puerto Rico reports the institution's damages are over \$100 million but that the students will be able to complete their academic courses.

Con la actualización de los informes de daños, el presidente interino de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (UPR), Darrel Hillman, informó hoy que los daños en la institución ascienden a sobre \$100 millones.

A la vez que aseguró que el año académico no se perderá y los estudiantes podrán completar sus cursos, Hillman indicó que el monto de los daños ha ido en aumento según han continuado las evaluaciones de las estructuras y de los equipos.

“La UPR, como todos, sufrió un gran embate”, expresó Hillman. “Ya hemos evaluado edificios. Entró mucha agua en los planteles. Estamos trabajando con el hongo y otras situaciones”.

“Empezamos con unos estimados, pero según se van energizando los edificios, nos vamos dando cuenta de equipos que se dañaron”, agregó.

El funcionario sostuvo que inicialmente la UPR trabajará con su seguro privado, que cubre hasta \$100 millones.

Luego, lo que supere dicho tope y los deducibles - que pudieran superar los \$2 millones - serían costeados por **FEMA**, según Hillman.

Señaló que el recinto que más daños sufrió “por pies cuadrados” fue Humacao, donde la cantidad estimada ronda los \$34 millones.

“Estamos trabajando con todo esto, pero los estudiantes pueden estar seguros de que no perderán el año y que podrán continuar con sus carreras académicas”, explicó Hillman.

“Van a completar este semestre aunque sea (terminando) en febrero. No obstante, comenzaría el segundo semestre para que se termine antes del 30 de junio”, abundó el presidente interino, al mencionar la posibilidad de reponer el tiempo lectivo con sábados y métodos alternativos.

Asimismo, mencionó que ofrecerán la flexibilidad de que estudiantes puedan completar cursos en recintos que tengan más cerca de sus casas, aunque sea diferente al que esté matriculado.

Después de que el Recinto de Ciencias Médicas comenzara a dar clases - pese a algunas interrupciones - el pasado 9 de octubre, los recintos de Carolina y Arecibo iniciarán el 23 de octubre.

“Luego, la próxima semana, el 30 de octubre, empezarán todos los demás recintos, con excepción de Cayey”, señaló Hillman.

“Cayey se va a tomar una semana adicional por una avería que tuvo la subestación eléctrica”, añadió. “Eso se está trabajando internamente en el campus”.

Los únicos recintos que todavía no tienen servicio de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) son Cayey, Humacao y Utuado.

Carolina tampoco tiene, pero Hillman dijo que tienen un generador que le permite las operaciones esenciales.

En el caso de Ponce, comentó que sí tiene el servicio de la AEE, pero están atendiendo algunas averías internas.

Por otro lado, Hillman indicó que sí podrán abrir las residencias de estudiantes, aunque se están preparando para un “plan B”

“Se pudieran usar escuelas públicas. Ya tenemos asignada la (escuela) José Celso Barbosa en Río Piedras para hospedarlos (a los universitarios) si fuera necesario”, informó.

En dicha escuela el gobierno estableció uno de los puntos denominados “stop-and-go”, donde se preparan comidas calientes para personas afectadas por el huracán.

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EMIGRATION

City to help displaced hurricane victims, families at new Manhattan center (AM New York)

By Lauren Cook
October 16, 2017

[AM New York](#)

A service center dedicated to helping people displaced by recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Texas and Florida will open later this week, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday.

The center, set to open Thursday, will offer access to city services and in-person support from a range of government offices, including social services, health and mental hygiene, education and senior services. Representatives from the American Red Cross, New York Disaster Interfaith Services, Animal Care and Control and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will also be on hand to help people affected by the recent hurricanes and their families.

“New York City will help those affected by recent hurricanes in any way we can. We’ve been sending donations and emergency responders to affected areas, and now we’re setting up a central location to help displaced people in our city receive essential services and assistance,” the mayor said in an emailed statement.

Services will be provided at the Julia De Burgos Latino Cultural Center, at 1680 Lexington Ave. in East Harlem. The center will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Anyone looking for assistance can set up an appointment ahead of time, beginning Wednesday, by visiting nyc.gov or calling 311.

The city has already begun to prepare for what it anticipates will be an influx of displaced people from hurricane-ravaged areas, particularly residents from Puerto Rico. New York has one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the country, with over 1 million residents of Puerto Rican descent currently living in the state.

City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito said on Monday that the city must step up where “the federal government has come up short,” apparently referencing President Donald Trump’s response to Hurricane Maria.

“This is a humanitarian crisis the likes our city has ever experienced and we must do everything we can to help our fellow Puerto Ricans who have given so much to our city and to our country,” said Mark-Viverito, who visited the island in the aftermath of Maria.

Last week, Public Advocate Letitia James called on the de Blasio administration to do more to prepare for an influx of displaced people and proposed a range of initiatives that could help people in need.

De Blasio has said the city is preparing, but also warned that resources were already tight.

“I don’t want to encourage people to come here if they don’t have some family to turn to,” de Blasio said at unrelated news conference last Thursday. “We have to be really clear about this.”

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has also called on SUNY and CUNY schools to allow those affected by the hurricanes to pay in-state tuition rates to attend the school.

With Alison Fox and Laura Figueroa

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Puerto Rican students continue schooling in mainland U.S. (TribLIVE)

By Jamie Martines | Monday, Oct. 16, 2017
[TribLive/Trib Total Media](#) (Pennsylvania)

Dozens more students from Puerto Rico, will continue school in the mainland United States this week after Hurricane Maria shut down local schools.

Students have traveled as far as Connecticut, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania to live with family members and attend school. NPR reports that of Puerto Rico's 1,113 schools, only about 200 have reopened because of debris and a lack of electricity.

Julia Keleher, Puerto Rico's secretary of education, told NPR that students have lost between 35 and 40 instructional days because of the hurricane. This could have a significant impact on students' academic achievement.

As of Thursday, the Miami-Dade County school district had enrolled 251 Puerto Rican students. Orange County schools had enrolled nearly 300 students from Puerto Rico and 92 from the U.S. Virgin Islands, EdWeek reports.

The Orlando Sentinel reports nearly 40 students have enrolled in Volusia County schools in Florida since Hurricane Maria hit.

Last week, some families traveled from Puerto Rico to Broward County aboard a Royal Caribbean International Cruise ship, where local school district officials greeted them upon arrival and shared information about enrolling school-age students, Politico reports.

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WHITE HOUSE / CONGRESS / POLITICS

Rep. Nydia Velazquez: Puerto Rico ‘Could Become Another Flint’ (Daily Beast)

The New York congresswoman shared serious concerns with the lack of federal aid Puerto Rico has received.

Hayley Jones

10.16.17 2:34 PM ET

[Daily Beast](#)

Representative Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) is done with the federal government's lackluster response to the devastation in Puerto Rico.

On CNN, Congresswoman Velazquez—who is also the first Puerto Rican woman elected to the House—expressed great concern for the future of Puerto Rico.

After being devastated by Hurricane María, Puerto Rico residents have resulted to drinking water from Superfund sites. These are known hazardous-waste sites.

“This is one Superfund site we are aware, but there are 14 Superfund sites in Puerto Rico,” Velazquez told host Kate Bolduan. “So, the extent of the damage, this could become another Flint where so many children, old people—regular people in Puerto Rico could get affected.”

She continued, “We’re talking about contaminants, toxins, material, oil that are in this water.”

“And I’m really very concerned for this to happen in America, it’s just heartbreaking,” Velazquez added.

Bolduan goes on to ask Velazquez about her response to one of President Trump's tweets saying federal first responders cannot stay in Puerto Rico forever.

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OPINION

Hurricane Victims Don’t Have the ‘Complexion for Protection’ (Common Dreams)

A full-blown humanitarian crisis is on the horizon.

By Lois Marie Gibbs

Monday, Oct. 16, 2017

Common Dreams

Millions of Puerto Ricans are still without water, food, electricity and shelter, four weeks after Hurricane Maria destroyed the island. With waterborne illnesses on the rise, a full-blown humanitarian crisis is on the horizon.

“Raw sewage continues to be released into waterways and is expected to continue until repairs can be made and power is restored,” EPA warns in a memo.

Eighty-four percent of Puerto Rico is without electricity, and sixty percent of water treatment plants are out of service.

“Water contaminated with livestock waste, human sewage, chemicals, and other contaminants can lead to illness when used for drinking, bathing, and other hygiene activities,” says **FEMA**.

To make matters worse, Puerto Rico is home to 21 Superfund sites – the nation’s most deadly depositories of toxic chemicals. The island also has a five-story-high coal ash dump in Guayama that was hit by the storm.

Floodwaters have already mixed deadly toxins from these sites into nearby waterways, which residents are forced to use to bathe and drink. In a desperate attempt to save their own lives, some Puerto Ricans are drinking highly contaminated water from wells that were once sealed to avoid exposure to deadly toxins.

Families who have lost everything now must contend with the possibility that their groundwater is tainted with poison.

The Complexion for Protection

On the same day **FEMA** issued its warning, President Trump took to Twitter to complain, “We cannot keep **FEMA**, the Military & the First Responders... in P.R. forever!”

First, Mr. President, a reality check. The devastation caused by major storms takes years, not weeks, to repair. **FEMA** is still at work in New Orleans, twelve years after Hurricane Katrina, and in New Jersey and New York five years after Hurricane Sandy. EPA cleanup of contaminated sites takes even longer.

Second, a political check. Puerto Ricans are American citizens, and have been for more than a century. They serve in our Armed Forces and pay taxes, even if they weren’t allowed to vote for you – or any candidate – for President, and have no representation in Congress.

As Puerto Rico’s Governor, Roberto Roselló, wrote in his response to Trump’s Twitter tantrum, “The U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico are requesting the support that any of our fellow citizens would receive across our Nation.”

This is discrimination, plain and simple. When President Trump visited San Juan, he threw paper towels at a crowd of suffering people and scolded them for busting his budget. They weren’t amused by his theatrics.

They, like the Houston residents who live near waterways fouled by toxins from the San Jacinto Superfund site, are people of color – apparently not the right complexion for protection.

Dismissing the Victims

Dismissing victims is not unusual for this administration and for the EPA. The agency’s new chief, Scott Pruitt, spends his time on the road meeting privately with corporate CEOs responsible for these toxic waste sites. He then takes their wish-lists back to Washington so he can draft new ways to roll back the environmental protections they loathe.

But local community leaders, with few exceptions, have not been given the opportunity to talk with Pruitt.

Congress passed legislation in 1986 directing EPA to pursue permanent remedies or cleanups that conform to stringent standards. Although permanent cleanups cost more at the front end, they save money over the long term, as evident by the disruption of buried waste from storms like Harvey, Irma, Katrina and Sandy.

So, why won’t the EPA enforce the permanent cleanup of these sites to avoid future cleanup costs as well as protect the community?

Because the people who live around most Superfund sites are poor and of color and are considered not worth the investment.

This is even more the case in Puerto Rico, since lawmakers in D.C. feel no accountability to the island’s citizens, who are separated from the mainland and denied the right to vote.

The EPA Told Me So

How do I know this? An EPA regional representative recently told me they were not going to spend millions to clean up a site when the surrounding houses are worth \$60,000. It doesn't make cost-effective sense, he said; we'll just try to contain the waste.

Yet these houses are people's homes; inside are human beings raising their families, having backyard picnics and celebrating birthdays. The homes are their American Dream. How dare these government officials devalue their neighborhoods because they are not wealthy!

These families pay taxes, contribute to society and deserve every protection available from our government, regardless of their wealth, language or the color of their skin.

I fear that families that have already lost so much in this summer's severe hurricanes will suffer even more in coming months because of the color of their skin and the level of their income.

And as they try to clean up the mud and debris and rebuild their lives, families must also worry about how much chemical residue is in the mud they and their children have been exposed to.

They Don't Care, So We Must

There is no question in my mind that the Trump Administration does not care for victims, whether in Houston, Miami or San Juan. So we have to take responsibility to compel the administration to act and hold them accountable.

We have to force the government to protect people living near Superfund sites by permanently cleaning them up, and to give Puerto Rico's people the equal treatment they deserve.

Lois Marie Gibbs is a former resident of the Love Canal community and founder of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice, a project of People's Action.

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Hurricanes Present Economic Opportunity For Trump (Forbes)

Oct 16, 2017 @ 12:58 PM 79

Guest post written by Michael Stumo

Stumo is CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America.

Forbes

Three hurricanes have hit land in the U.S. in the past month, wreaking havoc on the power, transit and communications systems that keep our communities running and our citizens safe. Rebuilding Texas and Florida infrastructure could be a silver lining, putting Americans to work on construction sites and in factories.

But without Trump administration action, many of those jobs will be created in other countries. Foreign trade cheating has weakened many competitive U.S. industries. A new Department of Commerce report revealed that the U.S. trade deficit in July grew once again. The trade deficit with China increased by 3% to \$33.6 billion, the latest in eleven straight months of increases. Hurricane Harvey's devastation could push the trade deficit even higher if we rebuild using foreign, rather than USA-made goods.

President Trump has a chance to make a difference. On the campaign trail, a pro-American trade agenda galvanized the president's base. Tens of thousands of non-traditional voters were inspired to speak with their ballot. But the White House has delayed assertive action at a time when our country needs jobs to rebuild after these storms. As the CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America, I believe this is precisely the type of risk we try to hedge against by having an "America First" philosophy. Without empowering our own citizens with free and fair economic opportunities, we cannot act as a role model for the rest of the world.

Last April, President Trump announced investigations into imports of steel and aluminum under a trade law known as "Section 232." The results of this investigation would provide an opportunity to fight foreign subsidies with tariffs. Over the past decade, the American steel and aluminum industries have been decimated because the governments of Russia, South Korea, Vietnam, Turkey, China, Brazil and others have subsidized the dumping of products in the U.S.

Thousands of Americans lost their jobs. Since 2000, the U.S. steel industry has lost almost 48,000 jobs, including 14,000 in the last 18 months. The U.S. aluminum industry has lost 3,500 jobs in the past 18 months alone.

Some of President Trump's advisers are doing him and the country a disservice by delaying action. Since calling for the investigation, the White House has postponed the investigation's findings with no clear end in sight. Without follow-through, it's unclear when and how our manufacturing sectors will recover—if ever.

The production of steel and aluminum is critical to our nation's infrastructure and defense needs, especially at a time where we need to rebuild roads, bridges, and buildings destroyed by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Half a million vehicles were severely damaged or destroyed in Hurricane Harvey alone—which is expected to increase demand for steel. According to the Steel Institute's most recent data, U.S. steel mills are operating at just over 70% of capacity. We are just beginning to understand the extent of the economic disruption in the wake of the storms. Sudden, unexpected disasters like these highlight the risk of over dependence on imports. If the steel trade is rebalanced, this could be an opportunity to get these mills back to capacity and get Americans back to work in good paying jobs.

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SOCIAL LISTENING

Hurricane Maria DR-4339-PR – Social Listening Report

Monday, October 16, 2017 1300

Compiled by: Virginia Case, Bree-Constance Huffin, and Savannah Brehmer

Summary: People continue to use social media to locate loved ones, learn about utility restoration – many doubt validity of media and public official reports. In **FEMA**-related conversation, the public is pleased with information about supplies being distributed and help available, but they are not sure what the \$500 they've received is for, and there is criticism for the types of food some have received from **FEMA**. People are especially interested in the USNS Comfort – they're happy about the newborn delivered yesterday, and want to know how to obtain medical services. Efforts are underway to get students back to school and the reactions are mixed. Coast Guard and National Guard recovery efforts are especially appreciated.

Public Perception

FEMA Conversation:

- Individuals who have applied for assistance are asking questions on what the next steps are, and how they are able to get in contact with officials for a status update on their application.
- Heavy discussion surrounds a picture of the food **FEMA** is passing out to survivors continues to circulate and generate conversation.
 - The survivor states (10/13) **FEMA** is only giving out candy and snacks in their food boxes.
 - There are conflicting comments because some agree that this is what **FEMA** is really giving out and other survivors are stating they received MREs and canned foods.
 - The Digital Engagement Team is working on content to show what food **FEMA** is distributing.
- Many are trying to figure out the specifics of the \$500 Critical Needs Assistance money survivors could get from **FEMA**.
 - The conversation surrounds someone trying to explain the details of receiving the money based of an interview he had with a **FEMA** employee.

Public Sentiment:

- People are grateful for the military's help toward Puerto Rico's recovery.
 - Both the content from the National Guard and local media is well-received. (example 1, example 2, example 3)
 - Some are reacting positively to photos of soldiers passing out water.
- Most are grateful for their help toward Puerto Rico's recovery. (example 2)
- There are mixed reviews after Florida Senator Bill Nelson's press conference yesterday.
 - Mostly comments were supportive of the senator and his plans for recovery.
 - Most survivors are ready to see change in their community after the storm.
- The help and visits from local government officials giving back to survivors is receiving a lot of attention through different social media channels.
 - The Governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, visited the emergency Stop & Go of Roosevelt Avenue to check on staff and equipment for disaster assistance registration with FEMA and passed out food to survivors. (example 1 example 2 example 3)
 - The Mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz, visited and talked with survivors.
- The USNS Comfort is of great interest to the public. The baby born there yesterday is especially welcome news. (example 1, example 2, example 3) Many want to know how to get on the ship, and share phone numbers and a graphic with how to get there. (example 1, example 2, example 3) The Digital Engagement Team is working on a graphic to explain how services on the USNS Comfort can be accessed.
- In a comment posted to David Begnaud's update yesterday on the response, there's a petition to investigate local corruption at AEE and PREPA, though in response others say this has been an issue since before the storm.
- Heavy discussion surrounds a picture of the food FEMA is passing out to survivors.
- Many people are sharing their gratitude for the celebrities who are raising/donating money to Puerto Rico to assist in the recovery efforts. (example 1, example 2)
- A small amount of individuals are asking how they are able to get their identification cards to travel or what solutions are available for those who want to go to the mainland but have lost their ID cards.
- Individuals who are continuing to look for loved ones in the affected area are being told a resource that has been successful is the CrowdSource Rescue Group. One person has shared a screenshot of the texts that they received after CrowdSource was able to locate their loved one, and another shares how people are able to get in touch with group and the information needed for them to be effective.
- News is welcome from the Ponce mayor that goods are arriving at the port and hot meals are being served.
- Many individuals from outside the affected areas are continuing to share their frustration about the Federal Government's response to Puerto Rico in comparison to the response in Florida and Texas.
-

Operations

Private Sector:

- There's a phone number to call to request Loads of Love from Tide come to the Island.
- Reports of the maximum individuals should pay for gas continue to circulate. (example 1, example 2)

School:

- Classes are set to resume at the University of Puerto Rico, possibly as soon as in the next week. (example 1, example 2) Some are skeptical at the news as water and electricity may still not be there.

Communication:

- There have been reports from loved ones outside of the affected area that communications are coming back on in Aguadilla.
- An individual is sharing information on how survivors may be able to acquire satellite phones in order to communicate with their families while cell service remains scarce.

Critical Infrastructure/Public Works:

- As of 0700 ET yesterday Whitefish Energy is performing many critical infrastructural updates throughout Puerto Rico.
 - Rebuilding buildings, bridges, power, etc. (example 1 , example 2 , example 3)
 - Those inside and outside the impacted area are glad to see progress happening in Puerto Rico.

Energy:

- As of 1100 ET, 15 October, Power Source and Whitefish was contracted to help bring power and restore the city. (example 1 , example 2)

Life Safety

- Family members are continuing their search for loved ones who have been missing since the Hurricane.
 - San Juan- Example, Example 2
 - Cayey- Example
 - Toa Baja- Example
 - Cain- Example
 - Boqueron- Example
 - Ponce: A person's relative was at the Damas hospital, and they are not able to get more information about him. - Example

Public Safety:

- As of 1300 EST 10/15: San Juan has been slow to remove debris from the affected areas, and individuals are expressing their anger towards the mayor for the delay.
- As of 1300 EST 10/15: El Vocero is on the second phase of debris removal but people are unaware of when the first phase took place.
- As of 2100 EST 10/15: A facility in Isabela that was caring for sick children and adults was lacking the necessary essentials to keep them alive such as fuel, and air conditioning. As a result, the patients were able to be transferred to a proper medical facility where they were able to receive life-saving care.
- While La Fortaleza de Puerto Rico reports that water is potable in Tao Alto and Naranjito, people are reporting they still don't have access, and others are skeptical of the report.

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From:	FEMA-ESF15-Coordination </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=1684F0A97D524A068FB7B08BF23014BE-FEMA-ESF15->
Subject:	FW: Daily News Clips 10.10.17 DR 4335/4340 VI
Date:	2017/10/10 08:35:41
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Attached and below is the media monitoring report dated today, October 10, 2017, for DR 4335/4340 VI.

Media Monitoring Report

October 10, 2017

FEMA Region 2

This report is a compilation of news media stories pertinent to Region 2 and the Sandy recovery efforts in New York and New Jersey for FEMA employees and a small number of government officials working on FEMA's issues. To be added or removed from this distribution, please e-mail gina.callaghan@fema.dhs.gov

HEADLINES

HURRICANE MARIA PUERTO RICO

FEMA Officials Say They're 'Slowly Starting To Make Progress' In Puerto Rico

By Deborah Barfield Berry
[USA Today](#), October 9, 2017

Embarking On A Puerto Rican FEMA Aid Mission (VIDEO)

[CNN](#), October 7, 2017

FEMA Chief: Political Disputes Hurting Puerto Rico Relief

By Luis Alonso Lugo
[Associated Press](#), October 9, 2017

Mayor Of Puerto Rico's Capital Who Was Previously Singled Out By Trump Comes Under New Criticism From FEMA Head

By Laura King
[Los Angeles Times](#), October 8, 2017

FEMA Removes — Then Restores — Statistics About Drinking Water Access And Electricity In Puerto Rico From Website

By Jenna Johnson
[Washington Post](#), October 6, 2017

Puerto Rico Wants \$4.6 Billion From Congress To Meet ‘Immediate Emergency Needs’

By Jessica Kwong
[Newsweek](#), October 9, 2017

Most Of Puerto Rico Remains Dark Nearly Three Weeks After Storm

By Mark Chediak
[Bloomberg News](#), October 9, 2017

Minus Electrical Grid, Puerto Rico Becomes Generator Island

By Richard Fausset, Frances Robles and Deborah Acosta
[New York Times](#), October 7, 2017

Big Tech Has Big Plans To Help Reconnect Puerto Rico

By Matt O'Brien
[Associated Press](#), October 7, 2017

Nearly 3 Weeks After Hurricane Maria, Distributing Aid Across Puerto Rico Is A Mess

By Oren Dorell
[USA Today](#), October 9, 2017

DHS Won't Renew Waiver That Let Puerto Rico Import For Cheap

[Daily Beast](#), October 9, 2017

FEMA Still Planning Additional Influx Of Federal Personnel In Puerto Rico

By Eric Katz
[Government Executive](#), October 6, 2017

OTHER PUERTO RICO NEWS

Puerto Rico Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Slowed By Hurricane Maria

By Laura Kelly
[Washington Times](#), October 9, 2017

HURRICANE MARIA USVI

EDC Company To Announce Major Donation To USVI During Governor's Press Briefing

By Ernice Gilbert

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 10, 2017

WAPA Currently Focused On Reconstructing ‘Backbone’ Of Territory’s Electrical System, New Updates Announced

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 10, 2017

New Viya Network Supporting Wireless Connections on Island

By James Gardner

[St. Thomas Source](#), October 9, 2017

St. Croix Residents Express Satisfaction In Mapp Administration’s Handling Of Disaster

By Ashley Scotland

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 9, 2017

Pence’s Visit Was Good, So Donald Trump Doesn’t Need To Visit

By Darren Sands

[BuzzFeed](#), October 9, 2017

Debris Removal Operations Progressing With A \$10 Million Boost From FEMA

[St. Thomas Source](#), October 9, 2017

NEW YORK CITY

NYCHA Construction Begins Five Years After Sandy

By Nathan Weiser

[Red Hook Star Revue](#), October 9, 2017

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HURRICANE MARIA PUERTO RICO

FEMA Officials Say They're 'Slowly Starting To Make Progress' In Puerto Rico

By Deborah Barfield Berry

[USA Today](#), October 9, 2017

WASHINGTON — Federal emergency officials said Monday the disaster in Puerto Rico has emerged as one of the “most logistically complex and challenging events” the U.S. has faced, but said they are continuing to make progress on key recovery goals such as shipping in hundreds of generators to try to restore power on the devastated island.

“We’re slowly starting to make progress every day,” Brock Long, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, told reporters Monday at the agency’s headquarters in Washington. “It’s not going to move as fast as people want because you’re dealing with a very fragile power system, very fragile public works system, very fragile roadway network system.”

Long defended the agency’s response in Puerto Rico saying it has faced “unique challenges” getting supplies and resources to the island, which was hard hit by Hurricane Maria Sept. 20. FEMA and the administration have come under intense fire for what critics have called their slow response.

“They are still struggling to ramp up,” said Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, the top Democrat on the House Homeland Security Committee. “We’ve gone this far and we still have areas challenged with getting ... water and food.”

Thompson was part of a bipartisan congressional delegation that spent Saturday in Puerto Rico assessing the damage. The trip included a helicopter tour, a briefing with federal and local officials and a lunch with Gov. Ricardo Rossello.

Long, who visited the island last Tuesday, said officials faced a host of challenges getting supplies to the island, particularly when the ports and airports were closed. He said in some cases, ships were circling south of Puerto Rico laden with supplies but unable to land.

Federal agencies had to build a make-shift air traffic control system to get the airport open and get supplies in, he said.

“Maria was such a catastrophic hit that all ports of entry – water ports and airports – were damaged,” said Long, former head of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.

More than 16,000 federal and Department of Transportation workers are in Puerto Rico and another 3,000 in the Virgin Islands to help, Long said. FEMA announced Monday that it is

looking to hire more hurricane recovery workers, focusing on temporary employees in disaster areas and on-call emergency response staff.

“The problem with Puerto Rico is diminished capacity,” said Long, adding that many local and state workers were also victims of the storm. “We had to play a greater first-responder role than we typically would on the continental United States, which as I said, we’re not really designed to do that in many cases.”

Long said the agency worked with local officials to figure out ways to get the airports and ports open.

“It takes time to do that,” he said. “We can’t just flip a switch and make the systems work.”

Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, chief of engineers and commander general of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, said power is one of the most critical issues in Puerto Rico.

Federal officials said they are working to restore power, focusing on getting generators in place particularly at hospitals. “It’s going to take a long time to get electricity to everybody in Puerto Rico,” Semonite said.

Semonite said there are 200 generators on the island ready to be installed and another 400 coming. In addition, he said, a leased power plant is on a barge and on its way to the island.

It will probably take about a month and a half before it’s up and running, he said.

Still, some groups and charities complained Monday they can’t get much-needed supplies to the island.

President Trump has feuded with the mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulin Cruz who has also complained about the administration’s response. Trump blasted some of the criticism, saying it was fueled by “politically motivated ingrates.”

Long said he took some heat after saying on a TV program Sunday that he “filtered out” the mayor.

“We do have to filter out a lot of the noise that’s out there and do our job, keep our heads down,” he said Monday. “I think emergency management has to stay apolitical obviously. My goal is save lives and sustain lives. Disasters do not discriminate between politicians.”

In the last six weeks FEMA has responded to four hurricanes, including three of which were major hurricanes, officials said.

“It’s been an amazing hurricane season so far,” Long said.

Beginning with Hurricane Harvey in August, nearly 3.5 million people have registered for individual assistance under FEMA, Long said. He said so far about 350,000 Puerto Ricans have registered for aid.

“That number is going to grow tremendously as we continue to locate and get people entered into the system,” he said.

Thompson said the congressional delegation asked Gov. Rossello to provide an assessment of damage as soon as possible. The House is expected to consider another round of disaster aid funding this week.

“I left there feeling like Puerto Rico needs a hell of a lot more help than one can imagine,” he said.

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Embarking On A Puerto Rican FEMA Aid Mission (VIDEO)

[CNN](#), October 7, 2017

CNN's Leyla Santiago goes on a black hawk mission to show viewers the new sense of urgency in Puerto Rico.

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FEMA Chief: Political Disputes Hurting Puerto Rico Relief

By Luis Alonso Lugo

[Associated Press](#), October 9, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) — Political differences are hurting the U.S. government's response to victims of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency said Monday. He did not identify which individual officials he blamed, but the mayor in San Juan has drawn the ire of President Donald Trump for her criticism about how quickly aid is reaching people on the island.

"The unity is not where I want it to be," FEMA Administrator Brock Long said. "When you cannot get elected officials at the local level come to a joint FEMA office because they disagree with the politics of the governor, it makes things difficult and the information fragmented."

Earlier Monday, Long said in television interviews that he had "filtered out" San Juan Mayor Carmen Cruz, Trump's most vocal critic about the hurricane response. Cruz's spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment; his phone rang unanswered and his voicemail was full.

Cruz complained Monday morning via Twitter that "San Juan legislators arrived to the Emergency Operations Center to discuss debris and flooding. The mayor was not invited."

On Sunday she had tweeted: "Power collapses in San Juan hospital with 2 patients being transferred out. Have requested support from @FEMA_Brock NOTHING!"

Cruz backs the independence of Puerto Rico from the United States but is a member of the Popular Democratic Party, which supports maintaining the territorial status quo.

Gov. Ricardo Rossello supports the island becoming another U.S. state.

Long on Monday expressed frustration with the criticism his agency has faced. He attributed the criticism to the inability to disseminate messages to the population via social media or cell phones because the telecommunications were disabled.

"That is a lesson learned," Long said.

Long said 16,000 federal and military assets are on the ground in Puerto Rico and about 350,000 Puerto Ricans have registered so far in the FEMA system to receive financial assistance. As of Sunday, FEMA said, nearly 12 percent of customers have electricity on the island and about 57 percent of customers of the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority have drinking water.

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Mayor Of Puerto Rico's Capital Who Was Previously Singled Out By Trump Comes Under New Criticism From FEMA Head

By Laura King

[Los Angeles Times](#), October 8, 2017

The Trump administration is brushing off fresh criticism from the mayor of San Juan over the federal government's recovery effort in hurricane-battered Puerto Rico.

William "Brock" Long, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, on Sunday dismissed the latest pleas for urgent assistance from the mayor, Carmen Yulin Cruz, as "political noise."

"We filtered out the mayor a long time ago," Long said on ABC's "This Week" when asked about a pair of early morning tweets from Cruz, in which she said she had unsuccessfully sought help from FEMA after the power failed at a major hospital.

Referring to FEMA, the mayor added sarcastically, "Oh sorry they are collecting data."

Last week President Trump in a tweet suggested Cruz is a "politically motivated ingrate." She had made a number of pointed public criticisms of the pace and scope of the federal relief effort after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico on Sept. 20, wrecking the electricity grid and leaving many of its 3.4 million people desperate for food, water and gasoline.

Trump visited the U.S. territory on Tuesday and hailed the "amazing job" being done by federal officials in rushing in supplies and working to restore electricity and power. The president raised eyebrows when he alluded again to the cost of the recovery effort – an observation he has not made about the ongoing expense of helping Texas and Louisiana after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma – and told officials that they should be proud that the death toll had been low compared to that in the "real catastrophe" of Hurricane Katrina, which struck New Orleans in 2005.

The president repeated his self-congratulatory assessments about his administration's work in Puerto Rico again on Saturday night, in a television interview with the conservative former governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, on the Christian cable network TBN.

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FEMA Removes — Then Restores — Statistics About Drinking Water Access And Electricity In Puerto Rico From Website

By Jenna Johnson

[Washington Post](#), October 6, 2017

Update: As of Friday afternoon, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is once again reporting two key statistics – the percentage of Puerto Ricans who have access to drinking water and the percentage of the island that has power – on its webpage tracking the federal response to Hurricane Maria.

As of Wednesday, half of Puerto Ricans had access to drinking water and 5 percent of the island had electricity, according to statistics published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency on its Web page documenting the federal response to Hurricane Maria.

By Thursday morning, both of those key metrics were no longer on the Web page.

FEMA spokesman William Booher noted that both measures are still being reported on a website maintained by the office of Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rosselló, www.status.pr. According to that website, which is in Spanish, 9.2 percent of the island now has power and 54.2 percent of residents have access to drinking water. Booher said that these measures are also shared in news conferences and media calls that happen twice a day, but he didn't elaborate on why they are no longer on the main FEMA page.

“Our mission is to support the governor and his response priorities through the unified command structure to help Puerto Ricans recover and return to routines. Information on the stats you are specifically looking for are readily available” on the website maintained by the governor’s office, Booher said.

The statistics that are on the FEMA page, as of Thursday afternoon, include these: There are now 14,000 federal workers on the ground in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, up from 12,300 earlier in the week. All airports, federally maintained ports and post offices are open. More than 30 miles of roadway have been cleared, up from about 20 miles earlier in the week. About 65 percent of grocery stores have reopened, along with nearly all hospitals and dialysis centers. And 64 percent of wastewater treatment plants are working on generator power.

Those statistics illustrate President Trump’s assertions that the island is quickly making tremendous strides toward full recovery and that the media have exaggerated the conditions on the ground. He has noted that despite the force of the storms that hit Puerto Rico, the death toll is not as high as it was after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when about 1,800 people were killed. Officials have said that it could be months before power and water are fully restored to the island, especially in rural, isolated areas.

Trump, who visited Puerto Rico on Tuesday, has repeatedly noted that the infrastructure of the financially struggling island was already weak before the hurricane hit. In a series of tweets Sept. 25, Trump wrote that Puerto Rico was “already suffering from broken infrastructure & massive debt” and had an “old electrical grid, which was in terrible shape.” During his visit, Trump told reporters that it’s difficult to fix the power grid because it “was devastated before the hurricanes even hit,” and that federal workers have been bringing dozens of generators to the island to power hospitals, government buildings, shelters and other key locations.

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Puerto Rico Wants \$4.6 Billion From Congress To Meet ‘Immediate Emergency Needs’

By Jessica Kwong

[Newsweek](#), October 9, 2017

Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello has requested that Congress allocate \$4.6 billion “to meet the immediate emergency needs” of the hurricane-ravaged island and to help soften the blow to its economy.

In letters to congressional leaders and President Donald Trump dated Saturday and shared on Twitter Monday, Rossello asked that Congress “strongly consider” offering funding beyond the Federal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Relief Fund.

Other requests include \$3.2 billion in community development block grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, \$500 million in community disaster loan program funding from the Department of Homeland Security and \$500 million in social services block grants from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Rossello also requested smaller amounts of money from the Department of Transportation, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education.

“We are grateful for the federal emergency assistance that has been provided so far,” Rossello wrote. “However, absent extraordinary measures to address the halt in economic

activity in Puerto Rico, the humanitarian crisis will deepen, and the unmet basic needs of the American citizens of Puerto Rico will become even greater.”

In his letter, Rossello said the “unprecedented island-wide devastation” from Hurricane Maria has led to an independent damage estimate of about \$95 billion—equal to about 150 percent of Puerto Rico’s gross national product.

“As a result, in addition to the immediate humanitarian crisis, Puerto Rico is on the brink of a massive liquidity crisis that will intensify in the immediate future,” Rossello wrote.

The Trump administration last week sent a \$29 billion disaster relief fund request to Congress to deal with the aftermath of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, but did not detail how much was intended for Puerto Rico. The House could take up the issue this week.

On Monday, meanwhile, Rossello ordered an investigation into water distribution on the island after complaints from people in some areas that authorities were not delivering supplies. Three weeks after Hurricane Maria made landfall, drinking water has been restored to almost 60 percent of the island, yet only to about 20 percent in some parts of the north, according to the governor.

“If there is a place, a locality that is not delivering food to the people of Puerto Rico that need it, there’s going to be some hell to pay,” Rossello told CNN.

Meanwhile, the federal government on Sunday night allowed its 10-day waiver of the Jones Act, under which only American vessels may make cargo shipments between U.S. ports, to expire, barring foreign boats from providing further aid.

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Most Of Puerto Rico Remains Dark Nearly Three Weeks After Storm

By Mark Chediak

[Bloomberg News](#), October 9, 2017

It’s been almost three weeks since Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico and most of the island is still without electricity.

The U.S. Department of Energy said Monday that 85 percent of customers lack power. Some portions of feeder lines have been restored and about 30 percent of the island’s substations are back online, the agency said.

Crews are trickling in to help the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority restore service, which could be out for months.

The slow pace of the recovery has prodded Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello to ask Tesla Inc.’s Elon Musk for help rebuilding the grid with solar and batteries. The U.S. solar industry is also airlifting gear to the island as part of a humanitarian effort and to show how its technology can help keep the lights on after a natural disaster.

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Minus Electrical Grid, Puerto Rico Becomes Generator Island

By Richard Fausset, Frances Robles and Deborah Acosta

[New York Times](#), October 7, 2017

SAN JUAN, P.R. — Like many other frivolous things on the island these days, the shiny motorcycles at the Planet Honda showroom have been pushed to the side.

In their place are dozens of folding chairs, and on Thursday morning, they were all filled with Puerto Ricans waiting to buy the most essential machines on the post-hurricane landscape: portable generators, to light their powerless homes.

María Aguilera, 57, a teacher, was waiting in the line that had formed outside the showroom Thursday morning. When the sun sets these days, she said, she relies on candles for light. And like everyone else in Puerto Rico — including Gov. Ricardo A. Rosselló — Ms. Aguilera said she had no idea when the power grid might be restored.

“From the things I’ve seen with the infrastructure,” she said, “it could be months.”

Hurricane Maria’s near total destruction of the commonwealth’s electric power grid has transformed Puerto Rico into Generator Island. Running on gas or diesel, and ranging from lawn mower to moving-truck size, the generators are the only option for the roughly 90 percent of the island that has no access to the decimated grid. Generators now power big-box stores, high-rise apartment buildings, auto shops, fast-food restaurants, wastewater treatment plants and little country homes. And their low, incessant groan is the new drone note in the discordant symphony of post-storm Puerto Rican life.

The generators are a temporary fix that is raising health and safety concerns and highlighting the stark divisions of class in a place with a 45 percent poverty rate. They are also the only option for most Puerto Ricans for now, as the island struggles with restoring its electrical system — by far the most important and complex challenge the storm has presented.

In a news conference on Friday, Mr. Rosselló could not say when the system, which was infamously fragile before the storm, would be fully restored.

“There is no estimated date right now,” he said. “We have established, right at the beginning of this week, we want to have 10 percent of the energy generation in Puerto Rico. Now we’re up to 10.6 percent. And our expectation is, within the next month, to have 25 percent.”

Many big-box stores and hardware stores are selling out of generators for home use. Julito Ramírez, the Planet Honda general manager, said that his company was having a hard time keeping up with demand, selling 250 to 300 units per day. After ordering all of the generators he could find in the United States, he has turned to a cache he found in Canada.

“We are in that cycle of finding and bringing, and finding and bringing,” Mr. Ramírez said. The generator everyone wants, he said, is a \$6,000 model that can run a home air-conditioning system. The biggest model he had in stock this week was a \$2,300 machine that can run a refrigerator, some lights, a washing machine — but not an air conditioner.

For one customer, Victor Negrón, it would have to do. He said his old generator had given out two days earlier. “I’ve had to go to hotels to charge my phones,” said Mr. Negrón, 50, a health care executive. “We’ve lost all of the food in our refrigerator.”

The storm destroyed 85 percent of the island’s energy transmission and distribution system, and the fix could cost \$5 billion, said Ricardo Ramos, chief executive of the beleaguered Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, known as Prepa. The public utility is saddled with \$9 billion in debt and filed for bankruptcy in July. The Puerto Rican government also filed a form of bankruptcy in May.

The Trump administration has asked Congress to approve a \$29 billion aid package for Puerto Rico, as well as for hurricane-damaged Florida and Texas. But in the days after September 20, when Hurricane Maria strafed Puerto Rico, Prepa’s money troubles made it “almost impossible” to pay the large contracts required to bring in other states’ power companies

to help restore the grid, said José E. Sánchez, a director with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the head of the task force to restore power in Puerto Rico.

“It is not only personnel, but all the trucks and materials,” Mr. Sánchez said in an email. “That could cost millions of dollars.”

But Meena Dayak, a spokeswoman for the American Public Power Association, the trade group that coordinates the state-to-state mutual aid networks for public power utilities, said that Prepa never reached out to them for help.

“The way our mutual aid works is we can only go in if help has been requested,” she said over the phone on Friday.

Mr. Ramos, Prepa’s chief executive, said he did request help but when none came, he hired a Montana-based company, Whitefish Energy Holdings, to restore many of the power lines. Mr. Ramos said 200 subcontractors were already on the ground.

Andy Techmanski, chief executive of Whitefish, said that a shortage of housing for his crews meant that only 75 were on the island, and that clogged ports were making it a challenge to bring in heavy equipment.

He also said it would take six months or longer for all of Puerto Rico to have its power restored.

The rebuilding will be particularly difficult because many lines stretch across the island’s mountainous interior. There is also the question of whether Puerto Rico should modernize its rickety and outmoded system while it rebuilds. On Friday, the governor said that a modernization effort would “run parallel” with the effort to simply restore power. He said he has begun speaking with Elon Musk, the Tesla chief executive, about ways to increase green energy options for Puerto Rico, which received just 2 percent of its power from renewable sources before the storm. (Mr. Musk said on Twitter Thursday that rebuilding the island’s grid with independent solar and battery systems “could be done.”)

But Mr. Sánchez said that the assignment from the Federal Emergency Management Authority is to repair the system only. “We are there to repair-replace, but not to augment,” he said.

As he waited to buy his generator, Mr. Negrón sympathized with the governor. The island needed a better power system, he said. But people did not want to wait. His mother, he said, “wants her electric now.”

In the meantime, the generators rumble on, though not without problems. A few blocks from the Honda store, the Hospital San Francisco has had two generators fail since the storm, resulting in the evacuation of patients, according to El Nuevo Dia, a local newspaper. In a visit to the hospital Thursday, the lights were on, and a worker said a backup generator was powering them. But hospital officials declined a request for comment.

Across town at the Costco, Juan Torres, an assistant manager, showed off the massive, truck-size generator that the business, like many here, had installed before the storm. Mr. Torres said it was burning 1,000 gallons of diesel per day.

But Mr. Torres said that home generators normally offered at the store were sold out.

Across the island, the Army Corps of Engineers has set up 34 huge generators so far, running everything from police departments to water pumping facilities to a Prepa office, according to Lisa Hunter, a spokeswoman for the Corps. Corps officials said on Friday that 177 other generators arrived late in the week, with some of them headed to the United States Virgin Islands.

Camilla Feibelman, a founder of the Puerto Rico chapter of the Sierra Club who currently runs the Rio Grande chapter, said that Facebook was full of complaints about the generator noise on the island these days.

More seriously, she said, generators can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning when misused — a common concern among officials in post-storm environments. Last month, three people in Orange County, Fla., died from carbon monoxide poisoning after running a generator inside their homes.

Adriana González, a Sierra Club organizer in Puerto Rico, said the high cost of a generator “creates a disparity” between rich and poor. In her neighborhood, she said, “you have one house illuminated, and then total darkness for like a block.”

Mr. Ramírez, the Honda store manager, said that some generators were stolen from the showroom in the days just after the storm. So the store now makes the sale in the showroom, then has customers pick up their generators from a warehouse a day later.

If nothing else, it is a good time to be a generator repairman like José Miguel Márquez, 35. Mr. Márquez said he was so busy these days that the biggest problem is finding time to deposit his checks at the bank.

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Big Tech Has Big Plans To Help Reconnect Puerto Rico

By Matt O'Brien

[Associated Press](#), October 7, 2017

Facebook and Google once aimed to connect the world. Now they would be happy just to reconnect part of it.

In the wake of Hurricane Maria, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg pledged to send a “connectivity team” to help restore communications in ravaged Puerto Rico. Google parent company Alphabet offered to send its Wi-Fi balloons. They were among several tech companies proposing disaster response ideas, most aimed at getting phone and internet service up and running.

Some of these plans, of course, are more aspirational than others.

BATTERY POWER

Tesla CEO Elon Musk often takes to Twitter to mull over ideas, but on Friday his musings about sending his company’s solar-powered batteries to help restore Puerto Rico’s power attracted the attention of the island’s governor.

“Let’s talk,” said Gov. Ricardo Rossello in a Friday tweet .

Musk agreed. Hours later, he announced he was delaying the unveiling of Tesla’s new semi-truck and diverting resources, in part to “increase battery production for Puerto Rico and other affected areas.”

The need for help in restoring power and communication after Hurricane Maria is great: The Puerto Rican energy authority reported Saturday that about 88 percent of the island is still without power. The Federal Communications Commission said Saturday that 82 percent of cell sites remain out in Puerto Rico; 58 percent are out of service in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The FCC’s daily status report also shows significant wireline, TV and radio outages remain in both U.S. territories. The agency formed a task force this week and approved an advance of \$77 million to support carriers working to restore telecommunications services.

VAGUE PROMISES

But many offers of help from big companies remain somewhat vague. Google parent company Alphabet has proposed launching balloons over the island to bring Wi-Fi service to hard-to-reach places, as it has in other parts of the world.

The FCC announced Saturday that it's approved an experimental license for Project Loon to operate in Puerto Rico. But that doesn't mean it will be able to get them in the air anytime soon.

"We're grateful for the support of the FCC and the Puerto Rican authorities as we work hard to see if it's possible to use Loon balloons to bring emergency connectivity to the island during this time of need," said Libby Leahy, a spokesman for Alphabet's X division.

But there are limitations, she said Saturday.

"To deliver signal to people's devices, Loon needs to be integrated with a telco partner's network — the balloons can't do it alone," she said, adding that the company is "making solid progress on this next step."

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Cisco Systems has sent a tactical team and says it is working with local government, emergency responders and service providers to facilitate restoration and recovery efforts. The company, along with Microsoft and others, backs the NetHope consortium, which specializes in setting up post-disaster communication networks and has field teams now operating in Puerto Rico and several other Caribbean islands.

"Communication is critical during a disaster," Zuckerberg said after the hurricane hit, announcing that employees from his company's connectivity team — the same group working to build high-altitude drones that can beam internet service down to Earth — were heading to Puerto Rico. But with its aircraft still in the testing phase, the company said Friday that the engineers it's sent to Puerto Rico are focused on providing support to NetHope's teams.

SMALLER ORGANIZATIONS

Much of the ground work is being spearheaded by nonprofit organizations and small firms with expertise in rural or emergency communications.

Lexington, Massachusetts-based Vanu Inc., which sets up wireless communications networks in rural parts of the United States, Africa and India, is sending dozens of its small, solar-powered cellular base stations to volunteer crews on the ground in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Aid workers are pairing Vanu's devices with other technology, such as inflatable satellite antennas.

After setting up a network on the island of Vieques, off the main island of Puerto Rico, one team watched from a roof as local residents started getting text alerts from family members who had been trying to get in touch.

"They noticed everyone in the plaza pulling their phones out," said CEO Vanu Bose. "You don't have to announce you've lit up coverage. People know right away."

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Nearly 3 Weeks After Hurricane Maria, Distributing Aid Across Puerto Rico Is A Mess

By Oren Dorell

[USA Today](#), October 9, 2017

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The Auxilio Mutuo Hospital here can't figure out how to get specialized medical supplies from the nearby airport. A Puerto Rican in Tampa found the quickest way to deliver help to her hometown was to do it in person. And shipping containers filled with emergency goods are piling up at the Port of San Juan.

Nearly three weeks after Hurricane Maria devastated this U.S. territory in the Caribbean, individuals and charities on the U.S. mainland trying to send supplies to the island are facing a series of bottlenecks that are keeping help from reaching those most in need.

The barriers range from a lack of communication to blocked roads to a shortage of vehicles and drivers to make deliveries.

As a result, one Port of San Juan terminal is storing 3,400 containers — more than double the usual number, said Jose "Pache" Ayala, vice president and general manager for Puerto Rico at Crowley Maritime Corp.

Because of tangled power lines across roads, washed out bridges and highways and knocked out cellphone towers and radio antennas across the island, materials are leaving the Crowley terminal gate at 70% the normal rate before the storm, Ayala said.

The backlog affects goods and equipment from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, such as food and bottled water, bucket trucks, front-end loaders and 275,000 gallons of diesel and 75,000 gallons of gasoline.

"That relief cargo has priority," Ayala said. It also affects commercial cargo such as building materials and medications that are also in great demand, he said.

"It's easier to help internationally than it is in Puerto Rico," said Neil Frame with Operation USA in Los Angeles. The non-profit, which ships donated medical supplies into disaster areas around the world, has not yet found a way to deliver goods onto the U.S. territory.

His group is currently shipping supplies to Mexico after the earthquake and also helping in Texas after Hurricane Harvey, but there it was easy — workers just drove down and found people who could help distribute.

Because of lingering poor communications since Maria struck here Sept. 20, his group has only been able to connect with eight of about 60 hospitals on the island. "You know that the ones that really need it are the ones we haven't been able to talk to," he said.

Still, he has neonatal equipment that one hospital is waiting for and is planning to ship pharmaceuticals that have a shelf life, so they will not last if they wait in port.

Communications are still spotty and a major impediment for shippers and truckers.

"There are some packages sent by family to someone in Puerto Rico that because communications are so bad the person here doesn't know (it's coming)," Ayala said.

Trucker Ricardo Carbonell, 42, said damaged roads, downed trees and low-hanging power lines form another obstacle to get goods to those in need. And his company won't deliver if dispatchers can't get ahold of the recipient in advance.

"If there's no communications, they call and call, nobody answers the phone, and we don't bring them anything," he said.

Another trucker, José Vasquez, 46, of Toa Baja, described how he took a container last week from San Juan to Rio Piedra, unloaded it and brought the empty container back to Crowley. Usually he'd reload immediately, but since Maria knocked out the radio antennas between San Juan and his home base, he had to drive an hour to Toa Baja to get an order for his next load.

Normally, "I'd be gone in 10 minutes," he said. "Now I have to go there, one hour, and come back, another hour, to get another load out."

At Auxilio Mutuo Hospital, the only facility currently performing heart surgery on the island, administrators are having difficulty getting the specialized supplies needed for transplant patients.

“The issue is how do we get it from the airport to here,” said Carlos Méndez, associate administrator at Auxilio Mutuo. “We cannot communicate with anyone at the airport.”

Michael Fernandez, executive director at CARAS de las Americas, said some shipments languish for more than a week until the usual import tax is lifted for the emergency aid. And even now, “shipments are flowing, and a lot of non-profits are up and running, but that doesn’t mean aid coming from the government is actually getting there,” Fernandez said.

Liza Minnelli Pacheco, 43, a native of Guayanilla who now lives in Tampa, said Puerto Ricans want to send goods to relatives but don’t know what to send or how to arrange for the items to be picked up or delivered.

She and her friends in Florida from Guayanilla scrimped to raise money to deliver the aid in person. She traveled to her hometown on the hard-hit southern coast of Puerto Rico with a cooler full of insulin, some of which she gave to a city worker for a resident who had run out of her medicine.

“If a family in the U.S. wants to send things, it’s difficult,” Minnelli Pacheco said.

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DHS Won’t Renew Waiver That Let Puerto Rico Import For Cheap

[Daily Beast](#), October 9, 2017

The Department of Homeland Security will not renew its waiver to temporarily suspend the Jones Act, the department announced Monday. After Hurricane Maria wreaked destruction on Puerto Rico, the DHS temporarily waived the shipping law that bars the island from receiving goods carried on ships built in or operated by other nations, effectively doubling the price of imports in Puerto Rico. The waiver allowed Puerto Rico to import food, water, and supplies more quickly and for less money while the island recovered from the hurricane. Without the waiver, imports are expected to slow, and double in price again.

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FEMA Still Planning Additional Influx Of Federal Personnel In Puerto Rico

By Eric Katz

[Government Executive](#), October 6, 2017

The Trump administration on Thursday promised a large increase in the number of federal personnel on the ground in Puerto Rico, noting it still has a significant amount of short and long-term work ahead of it to help the hurricane-ravaged island.

Federal agencies have already deployed 14,000 personnel to the island and the U.S. Virgin Islands to deal with the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but it plans to expand those numbers going forward. Most of those already deployed came from the Defense Department, which has sent 9,000 individuals to assist in the recovery. FEMA itself has sent 700 employees, while the remainder have come from agencies across government.

“We are going to branch out,” FEMA Deputy Coordinating Officer Tito Hernandez told reporters on Thursday. Assistance personnel “are going to grow in number from DoD and all agencies.”

FEMA Administrator Brock Long, who previously called the Maria response effort the “most logistically challenging event” in U.S. history, said this week his agency would be in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands “for years.”

The agency, dealing with the destruction wrought by hurricanes Maria, Irma and Harvey, is currently spending \$200 million per day on activities funded by its Disaster Relief Fund. President Trump on Wednesday asked Congress for an emergency supplement of nearly \$13 billion to support those efforts. Congress last month approved \$15 billion in emergency funding after Harvey, which was split between FEMA’s disaster fund and Housing and Urban Development Community Block Development Grants. The disaster fund saw an additional \$6.7 billion deposit on Oct. 1 due to a scheduled increase for the new fiscal year.

Federal responders in Puerto Rico are currently focusing on providing food and commodities, reopening hospitals and providing generator support. Boosting communications is also a priority, Hernandez said, but presents a much longer-term problem because antennas in the island’s mountain ranges were destroyed. A Navy hospital ship, the USNS Comfort, has arrived at Puerto Rico and is now receiving patients.

In addition to Defense and FEMA, the departments of Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Energy; other Homeland Security components such as Customs and Border Protection; the Environmental Protection Agency; and others continue to provide assistance in Puerto Rico.

While it is already dealing with three disaster response efforts, FEMA is already preparing for the next one. Nate, which officials say could reach hurricane strength by the time it reaches U.S. land this weekend, is set to hit parts of Louisiana, Alabama and Florida.

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OTHER PUERTO RICO NEWS

Puerto Rico Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Slowed By Hurricane Maria

By Laura Kelly

[Washington Times](#), October 9, 2017

Hurricane damage to Puerto Rico’s pharmaceutical industry could hamper the U.S. mainland’s access to critical medications, including treatments for cancer, diabetes and heart disease, the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration says.

Dr. Scott Gottlieb has said the devastation in Puerto Rico could have broad challenges and implications on the medical product manufacturing base on the island. He called it a “critical health issue for Americans” that could have “significant public health consequences.”

On Friday, Dr. Gottlieb issued a statement saying the FDA is keeping a close watch on the most critical medical products and has stepped in to secure fuel to maintain production lines and logistical support.

Wendy Perry, vice president of the Pharmaceutical Industry Association of Puerto Rico, said Friday that about half of the island’s manufacturing plants were operating, although some only partially.

“Within the next week, we expect the rest of the manufacturing plants to start operating again,” Ms. Perry said by phone from Puerto Rico.

She said her organization is in direct communication with government heads about the priority and importance of bringing the plants back online.

“It’s important to understand we’re managing a situation that, even though we do have the plans, it is a catastrophic hurricane — something we have never seen before. Although we now are in control and we can execute all the plans for the short term, we have to continue to work together with the government in order to address the issues of electricity and telecommunications,” she said.

Puerto Rico’s pharmaceutical manufacturing business is vital to the economy, Ms. Perry said, because it represents 30 percent of the island’s total gross domestic product and provides salaries for employees at almost three times the typical rate for Puerto Ricans.

“That is why we have all the attention and resources from our local government, and I do have to stress the fact that they have been very open, we have communication channels open directly with each one of the heads of the local authorities with whom we have to deal with in order to ensure business continuing,” she said.

Puerto Rico’s drug manufacturing industry employs about 90,000 people and accounts for 72 percent of the island’s exports, representing about \$14.5 billion in revenue, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Hurricane Maria decimated Puerto Rico when it made landfall on Sept. 20 with sustained winds up to 155 mph, knocking out the power grid of the entire island.

Almost three weeks later, the island is running mostly on generator power, with limited cellphone service and debris blocking transportation routes.

About 50 pharmaceutical companies have manufacturing plants on the island. Although some companies reached for comment said they sustained only minimal or moderate damage, the challenge of operating on generator power is not meant to last more than a few weeks.

Employees are struggling to access their work locations and, along with other Puerto Ricans, are dealing with food, water and fuel shortages.

On the impact on the pharmaceutical supply chain, Dr. Gottlieb has said the FDA is worried about preserving medications, in part by shuttling them off the island, as well as providing relief to Puerto Ricans affected by the storm.

The FDA said it is worried about 40 high-priority drugs but has not named the exact medications that would be in short supply if power is not restored to plants and transportation routes are not cleared.

The FDA said it is working with at least five companies to prevent critical shortages of medical products in Puerto Rico.

Of the companies reached for comment — including Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Amgen and Eli Lilly — none reported major damage to its site. The companies said they were using generator power to keep the plants running. They also reported monitoring product inventory levels and supply routes while keeping manufacturing levels up at other international sites.

Among the products produced on the island are life-saving medications used to treat cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and HIV.

“Overall, our facilities fared very well given the magnitude of the storm, and we’ve begun to restart some operations under generator power,” Johnson & Johnson spokesman Ernie Knewitz said in an email. The company has about 3,600 employees and operates seven facilities on the island.

“We have a strong local team working through incredible logistical challenges, and we’re seeing progress each day. We are also closely monitoring our product inventory levels and will work to ensure all critical needs are met,” Mr. Knewitz said.

Pfizer said in a statement that it is working to repair damage and restore electricity to its facilities, relying on generator power and unsure how long it will be until power is restored.

“Overall, we have a healthy supply of finished goods available for patients and do not currently see a risk to patient supply,” the company said. “We are monitoring the supply situation closely and utilizing alternative manufacturing locations where possible. We remain in regular contact with the FDA and regulators from other countries.”

A spokesman for Eli Lilly, known for making diabetes medication as well as cancer and cardiovascular drugs, said its facilities were built to withstand hurricane conditions and that preparations before the storms included halting production, locking down facilities and instructing employees to stay home.

“Our inventory strategy for products is designed to protect against this type of event, and we see no product supply risk to global markets at this time. The affiliate sustained minimal damage as well,” the company said in a statement.

Nicolette Louissaint is executive director of Healthcare Ready, which helps coordinate with public and private entities to ensure a supply chain of medical equipment to disaster areas. She said Hurricane Maria’s devastating effects on the island and logistical challenges have slowed relief efforts.

“We still are learning about the overall impacts, especially the health impacts of Maria,” Ms. Louissaint said. “One of the things that we have to continue to think about is how we track and care for the patients that are still at risk. There have been reports that are coming out, and we’re starting to learn more about what the true medical needs are, but keeping our eye on that is going to be really important over the next few weeks, especially.”

Healthcare Ready has been working for six weeks straight to respond to the needs of people caught in the paths of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria.

Ms. Louissaint said Puerto Rico is still about 94 percent without power with only 12 percent cell reception. While hospitals, and some people, are powering with generators, damage to roads has slowed access to diesel and gasoline.

“We’re starting to see that gasoline is becoming more available, and that really is important because it allows people to start to go to work,” she said.

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HURRICANE MARIA USVI

EDC Company To Announce Major Donation To USVI During Governor’s Press Briefing

By Ernice Gilbert

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 10, 2017

The Government of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of its people, will receive a donation from an EDC firm said to be in the millions, The Consortium has learned. The announcement will be made today during Governor Kenneth Mapp’s press briefing, which will be held at 11:00 a.m. in St. Thomas.

The donation will coincide with the Mapp administration's announcement of an organization that will determine how funds collected on behalf of the USVI, through USVI Recovery, will be spent. The organization will include private and public sector individuals, and operate independent from the government's influence, Mr. Mapp has said.

On September 25, Mr. Mapp said the territory had received \$1.4 million through the website, a number that has most likely grown since the announcement. Initially, the entity was called "Virgin Islands Hurricane Recovery Task Force", but the governor told The Consortium at a recent press briefing that the name had changed.

The press briefing will be held at the West Indian Company (WICO) conference room in St. Thomas. There, Mr. Mapp will also give latest updates relative to the territory's recovery efforts following the two deadly storms.

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WAPA Currently Focused On Reconstructing 'Backbone' Of Territory's Electrical System, New Updates Announced

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 10, 2017

Here's WAPA's latest power and potable water restoration update.

ELECTRIC SYSTEM

Restoration and reconstruction work continued in both districts on Monday. The focus remains on reconstructing the backbone of the electrical system. The primary electrical circuits that are not currently energized must be reconstructed prior to service restoration to commercial or residential customers.

On St. Croix, following last week's installation of new utility poles from the Richmond power plant to Five Corners, crews continued stringing new primary lines along the path of Feeder 6A. On Monday, two additional buildings at the JFK housing community were energized and almost a dozen street lights were energized from the power plant to the LBJ housing community.

On St. John, crews continued to rebuild various electrical circuits in Cruz Bay as well as in the Gallows Point and Grande Bay areas.

On St. Thomas, crews worked on Feeder 8A developing primary circuits from Banco Popular west to Bellows International while energizing some customers along Harwood Highway. Crews also planted poles along the path of Feeder 7A. A portion of Feeder 7B, in the Sugar Estate area, was energized as well as WAPA's Tutu electrical substation. Crews continued to reconstruct a transmission circuit to interconnect the Tutu and East End substations. Approximately 25% of this work is completed.

WAPA personnel has removed electrical meters at locations where damage was apparent to either an electrical meter base and/or weather head. In these instances, the customer is responsible for all repairs. WAPA will not reinstall meters until repairs are made by a licensed electrician. Home and business owners are advised to make repairs to their damaged weather heads and or meter bases as soon as possible. Once crews have reached your neighborhood,

customers who have not had their weather head or meter base repaired, will not have service immediately restored.

POTABLE WATER SYSTEM

While water service remains available throughout Cruz Bay, St. John, there are two days of emergency water storage on the island.

There are six days of emergency water storage on St. Thomas. The Water Division continues to work with electrical crews to re-energize additional pump stations. The restoration of the pump stations will facilitate the resumption of water service to areas including Contant Knolls and Savan. The Lindbergh Bay pump station was returned to service over the last few days.

On St. Croix, there are four days of emergency water storage. WAPA is pumping at full capacity at Contentment, Mount Welcome and Concordia pump stations. This has facilitated water service to mid-island and Frederiksted town.

GENERAL INFORMATION

All electrical problems must be reported to the WAPA Emergency Call Centers to be properly documented and tracked. These problems include, but are not limited to, electrical service interruptions as well as damaged and downed facilities such as poles, transformers, and power lines. The WAPA Call Centers are now operating 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., seven days per week. St. Thomas – St. John: 340-774-1424 and St. Croix: 340-773-0150.

Customer service offices in both districts are functional. On St. Croix, customers can conduct business at the Authority's offices in Sunny Isle. In the St. Thomas-St. John district, a temporary customer service location has been established at WAPA's offices in Port of Sale Mall. In both districts, customer service representatives are available from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday-Friday. Self-service payment kiosks are also available at both locations during these hours.

WAPA's office telephones are operational in both districts. St. Croix: 340-773-2250 and St. Thomas – St. John: 340-774-3552.

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New Viya Network Supporting Wireless Connections on Island

By James Gardner

[St. Thomas Source](#), October 9, 2017

Viya's fast-tracked launch of a new wireless network has helped bring Internet and data services to customers across the territory in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, company officials said Monday.

Speaking at a news conference at Viya's headquarters on St. Thomas, company President and Chief Executive Officer Alvaro Pilar said a new 4G LTE network was planned to be rolled out at the end of September/beginning of October. In the face of the twin storms, Viya was able to "fast forward" the launch so that customers can get online.

It's not perfect, Pilar said, but it's been the quickest way to get way to get people internet – including government agencies ranging from the V.I. Water and Power Authority to the airports.

Viya was the first carrier to establish hotspots on island – federal officials coming in have even been able to take advantage of the service, Pilar said – and has been working with the territory’s two cell phone carriers, Sprint and AT&T, to get their networks back up and running.

Any Sprint customer able to get a Choice Wireless signal is able to tap into that network and use their phones, Pilar said. Meanwhile, Viya has helped to power AT&T generators, clear sites and lend technical support where needed.

Google’s parent company, Alphabet, has received permission from the Federal Communications Commission to launch its Project Loon weather balloons over Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to help restore cell phone connectivity to residents. Pilar said Viya has already touched base with company officials to see if it can be tapped as one of the local carriers whose frequencies can be used as an anchor for the balloons, which will be used as a “base” station to mass deliver voice and data service. (See Related Links below.)

In the meantime, Pilar said Viya owns “a lot” of bandwidth and frequency and plans to take advantage of it. The new Mi-Fi boxes that have brought residents flocking to the company’s offices are being handed out free to Viya customers with high-speed service while non-Viya customers are being signed up for plans. (Questions about billing can be answered at Viya’s website.)

The boxes’ speeds run from 6 megabits to 25, and Pilar said Viya is waiting for FCC approval to lower the frequency on its network from 850 megahertz to 600 to allow for better connectivity inside buildings.

The first set of 5,000 boxes are almost out, and while Pilar said he expects another shipment of 5,000 next week, the next plan is to sell cell phones that can be turned into hot spots for connectivity, he added.

The same plan is in place for St. Croix customers once the network there is lit up, and for St. John. Pilar said residents are also able to take advantage of hot spots while antennas are being put in place to allow residents to tap into the same network in places like Cruz Bay.

Since most of the hardware has been given to customers instead of sold, Pilar commended the FCC for giving the company seven months worth of Universal Service funds – federal funds given monthly to support communications in rural areas – to help boost finances.

Cable service, meanwhile, is dependent on the restoration of electricity throughout the territory, but Pilar said service is up – and is being used in some areas of St. Croix with power – and that Viya is working “hand in hand” with WAPA to get the lines up.

Never famous for its voice over-service, Viya might be the best on island right now, Pilar said, but added that residents should still feel comfortable keeping their landlines if they want to.

Asked Monday if Viya plans to go underground with its infrastructure, Pilar said he hopes to do so for the company's "core network." But while the government is considering it, customers still have to get service in the meantime.

"Were the key to normalcy," he added. "These days, normal is able to go on the internet, watch a movie, go on the internet, read the news or send an email. It's the same as having a cold drink or a shower, people need to feel normal and that's what we're working to achieve."

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St. Croix Residents Express Satisfaction In Mapp Administration's Handling Of Disaster

By Ashley Scotland

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 9, 2017

ST. CROIX — Optimism, patience, progress and community were some of the buzzwords floating around the point of distribution centers on St. Croix last Tuesday. Fifteen days after the USVI felt the first effects of Category 5 Hurricane Maria, The Consortium visited three of St. Croix's 5 distribution centers to get some feedback from the community about the government's response to the aftermath of the storm, and their personal experiences so far on the path to recovery.

Three weeks in, and the lines at the distribution centers are much shorter than they were immediately following the hurricane. Many factors may play a role in that, as the curfew hours continue to ease, giving people more time to maneuver, and stores have reopened. The territory has also seen an exodus of residents who needed to leave for various reasons.

With that being said, residents also praised the improvements at the distribution centers which has contributed to a much faster process of receiving goods. While most people interviewed for this story complained about the chaotic and unorganized setup during the early days of the distribution of goods and supplies, most acknowledged a shift and change as the days continued, and were very complimentary of the assistance provided by National Guardsmen from abroad. This reporter also witnessed the hard work of the local guardsmen providing exemplary service to those that they were serving.

Residents interviewed were mostly satisfied with the progress of the recovery thus far. A young man from the Williams Delight community, which was one of the hardest hit areas on the island, stated, "Things are moving slow, but we are making progress." He spoke of neighbors assisting neighbors in the clearing of roads and yards in his community, which seems to be a common theme in the days following the hurricane. Residents also seemed to agree with the curfew imposed by the administration. One resident felt the curfew should be adjusted so as to give more daylight time for residents to conduct business, telling a story of almost getting into a catastrophic accident during the evening hours as another car swerved into her lane to avoid some wires hanging from a pole.

Aside from those concerns, most residents said the administration was making progress with the resources available, with the presence of road crews throughout the island playing a role in that perception.

Yet, while most residents interviewed for this story felt that progress being made by the administration has been adequate, there were a minority of dissenters, with some incorrectly contending that most roads were cleared by residents and not necessarily government contractors. Others said that the chaotic days following Hurricane Maria and the seeming lack of a plan or any structure set in place for the immediate aftermath of the storm, contributed to some of the looting that occurred. They also pointed to the slow pace of FEMA's Blue Roof program, which Governor Mapp himself has reportedly pointed out to President Donald Trump in a recent face-to-face meeting.

A lot of residents were anxious to see what changes Hurricane Maria will bring. An educator expressed her opinion that, "Things will stay the same, because the people are the same."

What we do know is that thousands of Virgin Islanders left on mercy cruises and flights. It remains to be seen the impact their departure will have on the Virgin Islands economy moving forward, as the territory already suffers from a brain drain epidemic. When living conditions improve, will the Virgin Islands be able to attract back its young talent? Will things remain the same or will Hurricane Maria bring about some change that people desperately want in the way things are done? These questions won't immediately provide answers, but as the weeks, months and years pass — pending the Caribbean and the USVI remain free from major storms — the answers will reveal themselves with consequences accompanying the reality.

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Pence's Visit Was Good, So Donald Trump Doesn't Need To Visit

By Darren Sands

[BuzzFeed](#), October 9, 2017

US Virgin Islands Delegate Stacey Plaskett doesn't believe it's essential to the US Virgin Islands recovery efforts that Donald Trump visit the island territory devastated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Plaskett a week ago, amid a crisis of a lack of media and attention on the extensive damage of her territory, expressed alarm that the aftermath of Puerto Rico's had warranted a visit from President Trump, but that the US Virgin Islands seemed like an apparent afterthought. She made her concerns known in a national appearance with MSNBC's Joy Ann Reid.

Trump tweeted that he "will hopefully be able to stop at the U.S. Virgin Islands" but never made the trip. In an interview with BuzzFeed News, Plaskett said she was able to impart her concern about the American territory's recovery to someone else close to Trump with whom she had been quite impressed: Vice President Mike Pence.

Plaskett's satisfaction with Pence's visit comes just days after Trump visited San Juan, accenting his arrival by flicking several packages of paper towels into an audience of onlookers as if shooting a basketball at a hoop.

She said a solemn Pence visited a small white church that had had two sections of its roof blown off, leaving water and debris all over the floor.

“It has been heartbreaking to see the impact of hurricanes Irma and Maria on the Virgin Islands,” the vice president said before his wife offered residents comfort from the book of Colossians.

In addition to attending a briefing on the recovery effort, the Pences also visited a shelter and participated in a helicopter tour to survey the damage on all three of the US Virgin Islands.

“I think you can tell when someone is putting on a show, but I believe the conversations [the Pences] had with people, young people, the workers, the volunteers were genuine,” Plaskett told BuzzFeed News in an extended interview about the federal government’s response and the recovery effort. “I think that is something that comes across from them. I think because he’s been a governor he understands the human element of supporting people and understanding the day-to-day lives of people who have elected you. And I think that moves him and motivates him and that was clearly evident.”

Plaskett said her constituents are part of the “American experience” and take their role as Americans seriously. To have a sitting US president visit the US Virgin Islands would be “very gratifying” to residents, she said — and indeed a signal that their calls for relief and assistance from the federal government are being taken seriously.

“But is it necessary for us to move on in terms of our rebuilding?” Plaskett said. “I don’t think so.”

Plaskett said she told Pence and his staff that the federal government has an opportunity help overhaul the island’s infrastructure, while there have been struggles with the federal government’s initial response. “When I have had conversations with officials from FEMA going into and talking to people in neighborhoods, we’re seeing the issues people are having getting supplies, and getting support in a timely fashion,” said Plaskett.

“There were challenges that the federal government had that I don’t think we were ready for.”

Plaskett said federal workers were used to providing temporary roofing to homes that were partially destroyed but weren’t used to providing that type of assistance to people whose roofs had been totally ripped off.

“This is a test for the people of the Virgin Islands as a whole,” said Plaskett. “And it’s also a test for the United States and the African diaspora to get engaged to ensure that we’re not forgotten in that rebuilding.”

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Debris Removal Operations Progressing With A \$10 Million Boost From FEMA

[St. Thomas Source](#), October 9, 2017

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing more than \$10 million in expedited funding to support efforts by the U.S. Virgin Islands government and federal partners to clean up and remove the large quantities of debris left by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

“Clearing hurricane-related debris from Virgin Islands roadways and neighborhoods not only helps remove a health and safety hazard, it is a visible sign of recovery for all residents,”

said FEMA's Federal Coordinating Officer William Vogel. "These expedited funds, and more to come, will provide a valuable boost to island communities in their recovery efforts."

Because of the major disaster declarations for the USVI, FEMA is funding 100 percent of the costs of emergency debris clearance for 180 days from the declaration dates – until March 4, 2018, for Hurricane Irma, and March 15, 2018, for Hurricane Maria.

FEMA is providing supplemental funding to the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (VIWMA) for costs to remove eligible household debris that is moved to public rights of way, but residents should follow VIWMA's guidance.

With debris collection underway in residential neighborhoods, VIWMA asks that residents move hurricane-related debris as close to the edge of their property as possible without blocking vehicular traffic flow and to allow for the safe passage of emergency vehicles and repair crews. To have hurricane-related debris picked up it must first be sorted and may not include household garbage.

Waste must be separated into the following four categories:

Whites: appliances such as stoves, refrigerators and microwaves

Electronics: such as radios, computers and TVs

Vegetation: such as trees, branches, grass and plants

Roofing or construction material: galvanized metal, wood, sheetrock, etc.

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NEW YORK CITY

NYCHA Construction Begins Five Years After Sandy

By Nathan Weiser

[Red Hook Star Revue](#), October 9, 2017

"It is a great day for this community," Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez said at the groundbreaking for the construction of Red Hook East and West. "Here we are in a path to recovery. In that sense, we have to make sure the rebuilding we do is one that is built to last."

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), along with elected officials, came to Red Hook last month for a ceremony signifying the start of the much anticipated roof replacements for Red Hook East and West buildings. This will be the first stage of a massive project funded by FEMA to improve conditions at NYCHA, which comes five years after Hurricane Sandy ravaged the neighborhood.

On the morning of September 5, NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye along with 7th District Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Assistant Speaker Felix Ortiz for Assembly District 51 and Red Hook Councilman Carlos Menchaca "broke ground" on the roof of 791 Hicks Street of a \$63 million roof construction project. Red Hook East Tenant Association President Frances Brown and Red Hook West Tenant Association President Lilly Marshall also made their way up to the roof.

The plan is to replace all 28 roofs of the Red Hook Houses by the end of 2019. Replacing the roofs will benefit more than 6,000 residents who will see fewer leaks and a better quality of life than with the roofs they have.

“The people of Red Hook deserve better and I am glad that the administration recognizes that it is about time to move forward in everything that needs to be done in Red Hook,” Ortiz said.

Sandy caused a lot of long-lasting damage to the Red Hook East and West complex and this is a first major step in the rebuilding.

“Today we are moving closer to repairing that damage {from Sandy} by building back stronger with storm resilient technology so that NYCHA residents will be safer in future storms,” Olatoye said in front of 791 Hicks Street.

She went on to say that this project that will be beginning very soon will ensure that NYCHA buildings will be safe in extreme weather events.

“Our Sandy work proves that with sufficient federal funding, public housing can provide safe stable homes in weather events,” Olatoye said. “In Red Hook, we are investing \$500 million to repair all roofs, install a new heating and hot water system, as well as structural reinforcement, flood protection and full backup power new playgrounds and improved retail spaces.”

This \$550 million investment in the Red Hook Houses is part of NYCHA’s Sandy Recovery to Resiliency program to build back stronger than ever. This project will transform the developments into resilient sites that can effectively withstand future weather challenges.

Olatoye also added that \$6 million has been invested into the Red Hook Community Center. This is an unprecedented investment in public housing and Councilman Menchaca wants to make sure that the project is done in the right way.

“The community remembers for such a long time about how much investment has come in but let us not forget that this investment will be the largest of its kind ever to public housing in the country,” Menchaca said. “Nowhere else are we getting almost half a billion dollars that is coming here, but we want to make sure that it is done right. .”

This project, which is in the Capital Projects Division of Recovery and Resiliency, will install new security cameras, door security access systems and replace the exterior site lighting fixtures and bulbs.

Replacing the roofs at Red Hook East and West is the first phase of an almost \$550 million investment in the Red Hook Houses, which is part of NYCHA’s Sandy Recovery to Resiliency program. The program will build the Houses back to be stronger than ever and transform the developments into resilient sites that can effectively withstand future weather challenges.

KPF Contracting Inc was hired to do the construction. They will repair and replace vital infrastructure, and will flood proof to protect against the impacts of climate change, like rising sea-levels. They will also install stand-by back-up generators.

“We have an incredible team at KPF that is one of the best and leading designers in the world,” Menchaca added. “We need to continue to hold them accountable throughout the rest of the process, and I am confident that with your support and with you being in the room and making your voices heard that we are not only going to get new roofs but that we are going to get the jobs that we deserve.”

Congresswoman Velazquez voiced some disappointment that according to her the country is better prepared to respond to a nuclear threat than the nation is to respond to a category five storm. She thinks that we need to learn from Sandy and what has now been happening in Houston.

“I am so happy that my bill passed out of the committee thanks to the leaders in Red Hook that helped me draft this legislation based on our own experiences,” Velazquez added. “Shola, I want to thank you for your incredible leadership, and the residents and the public engagement that has taken place here. I am so thrilled that we were able to secure the federal funding. It took us a while as you know.”

“When natural disaster strikes the federal government must show up and provide the leadership to make families whole,” the Congresswoman said. “We are ready to start the construction of the 28 roofs in these buildings and the senior center. That will be a great addition.”

The Red Hook roofs project will provide new roofs, and will repair and/or replace the parapets and railings at all the 28 high-rise residential buildings within the Red Hook East and West development. These 28 buildings are home to more than 8,000 residents.

“It is like anything else, if you have a strong roof and a strong foundation, then you can take care of the rest inside,” Ortiz said. “We need to prevent the water from continuing to leak into the apartments. I have been to many apartments that have a lot of mold, a lot of paint is falling apart, and I think that is because of the water leaking from the top of the roof.”

According to NYCHA, the new roofing is a top-of-the-line liquid-applied roofing system with a 30-year warranty. The system will provide a better building insulation, reduce the amount of heat retained by the roof and eliminate water intrusion.

“We are very happy that we were able to secure funding for the roofs together with the federal government,” Ortiz said. “I think this is a step in the right direction.”

The second stage of the timeline of improving Red Hook East and West includes basement restoration and flood protection. This stage will begin in early 2018 and be finished at the end of 2019.

The third and fourth stages will both begin in 2018 and be finished by the end of 2021. The third stage will include boiler/generator plant building located on Clinton Street and W 9th St to provide heat and power for the whole East and West development. The third stage will also consist of new MEP annexes above the FEMA flood level.

The fourth stage will include an overall site restoration.

Some of the development improvements during the encompassing project will include replacing the playground including nine lily pad play areas and three larger destination play areas, restoring the retail spaces at building 29 and upgrading the above apartments, constructing elevated courtyards to provide flood protected building entries and replacing the underground electrical wiring system.

According to NYCHA, they will also be removing hazardous materials and cleaning crawl spaces, replacing and/or repairing the doors, fixing the door frames and hardware damaged by water and replacing electrical conduits and plumbing pipes damaged by water in the basement areas.

Additional building improvements will consist of replacing building entrances and improving the back water valves on sewer/storm plumbing lines.

Another mission of the project will be to make the area more resilient. They will dry flood proof areas that are below the FEMA flood level. They will build new boilers and generators and install them above the FEMA flood level.

From an energy perspective, they will be installing backup power generators and will be taking additional site wide energy and sustainability measures. This step is awaiting Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approval.

This massive NYCHA construction project is all scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021.

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Making Rooms: Tour Brooklyn's Slick Disaster House

By Lauren Gill

[Brooklyn Daily](#), October 10, 2017

Get a peek at sweet relief.

Next weekend you can take a tour of a home you will hopefully never have to live in! A prototype house designed for disaster victims will open its doors to visitors on Oct. 14–15 as part of Open House New York, an annual two-day event that grants public access to normally closed spaces across the city. The slick model apartments are much nicer than the typical emergency tents and trailers, and the project's architect wants people to know that it is possible to house catastrophe victims in humane conditions.

“We have to show people everyone deserves to have a quality environment critical to their health and well-being,” said Jim Garrison, a professor at Pratt Institute. “The reason it’s nice is because people have to make it their home.”

The city commissioned the Urban Post-Disaster Housing Prototype shortly after Hurricane Sandy, and it was assembled in a lot Downtown in just 13 and a half hours, creating two three-bedroom apartments and a one-bedroom unit bolted together to make a three-story building.

Garrison designed the housing for dense urban areas, and it emulates the streetscapes of Brooklyn.

“They’re meant to make complete streets like brownstones and townhouses would,” he said.

After a disaster, the housing could be quickly assembled in narrow spaces, such as the Ikea parking lot in Red Hook or next to public housing complexes.

The prototype has been sitting in the lot since it debuted in 2014, and is usually only open by appointment. Garrison would like to see his design deployed to areas hit by recent hurricanes, although there has not been enough support to make it happen.

“It takes a lot of political will and money, we haven’t been able to move on it,” he said.

In addition to the prototype home, Open House New York will also let visitors explore other usually closed Brooklyn sites, including the Sims Sunset Park Material Recovery Facility and the Kingsland Wildflowers Green Roof in Greenpoint. New to the program this year are tours of Bushwick’s Evergreens Cemetery and the Five Boroughs Brewing Company in Sunset Park.

Open House New York (Cadman Plaza East and Red Cross Place Downtown, www.ohny.org). Oct 14–15, every 20 minutes from 10 am–4:40 pm. Free, but RSVP required. Reach reporter Lauren Gill at lgill@cnglocal.com or by calling (718) 260–2511. Follow her on

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OTHER NEW YORK NEWS

L Train Shutdown: L-Pocalypse Or Can’t Bloody L Wait?

By Nikki M. Mascali

[Metro](#), October 10, 2017

Just when you think you’re out, the L train pulls you back in — and leaves you on a platform or on the subway for an undetermined amount of time.

Just yesterday, there were delays in both directions on the beleaguered line due to an unspecified investigation between Jefferson Street and Morgan Avenue. And that came less than a month after two separate issues — a door malfunction followed by a signal issue — crippled the line and stranded straphangers for hours.

The long-lambasted L train shutdown won't happen for another 18 months, but many New Yorkers likely wish it were sooner to end their misery. But that's next to impossible, said Metro columnist and transportation historian and advocate Larry Penner.

"There's so much prior planning necessary before the shutdown, you've got to get it right," he said.

The 15-month shutdown, scheduled to begin in April 2019, will rehabilitate the Canarsie Tunnel, which goes under the East River and was severely damaged by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012.

Since the work includes demolition and reconstruction of the tunnel, tracks and track bed, the L train will only run between Bedford Avenue and Canarsie-Rockaway Parkway, meaning there will not be service to or from Manhattan during that time.

"In fairness, we're a 24/7 city, and with the subway structure fragile as it is, it does make sense to only take care of one corridor at a time," Penner said.

The MTA did not respond to requests for comment and updates on the L train shutdown, but a similar shutdown in 2013 of the Montague Street Tunnel, which the N and R trains use between Manhattan and Brooklyn, opened a month ahead of schedule after 13 months, so there is hope for the L train.

"That was a good model and success story," Penner said. "It's better to go in and get it all done at once than piecemeal. When you have to stop and start work every 15 minutes, you're not being efficient. Plus, the concept of going in and shutting it down makes sense because you save a lot of money."

L train options are out there

Though Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg recently shot down hopes that 14th Street would go car-free or bus-only during the L train shutdown, she did say parts of the thoroughfare may have bus-only access at certain times, Streetsblog reported.

Straphangers can still use the J, M and Z trains to get into Manhattan as well as the NYC Ferry, which Magdalena Mazurek-Nuovo of Williamsburg divorced the L for.

"It was just unbearable," she said of the train. "It's very unpredictable and horrible. I don't even mind being in a crowded train — it was just sometimes there were no trains for a long time."

Astrid Harders, another longtime L rider, said she's curious to see what will really happen with the shutdown. "It might not be that bad — weekends in Williamsburg might be less crowded, less tourists and hungover college kids."

A Chariot awaits

Another option for stranded straphangers may be Chariot, a car service that launched its third route in New York City today. Going from Williamsburg to Midtown, it is the company's third route in the city since its August rollout — and its first that was crowdsourced by customers.

Chariot works like a rideshare, in which its app will let you know how close one of the commuter vans is and allows you to reserve a seat. Then you just go to one of the designated stops and hop on for \$4 a ride or \$119 for a monthly pass.

“We don't disclose exact numbers, but we've been growing week-over-week,” Marketing Manager Brittany Lewis said, adding that “multiple” new routes are expected by yearend.

While Chariot is not actively planning to pick up the slack during the L train shutdown, “we are open to whatever residents want,” Lewis said. “So if that time comes and that's something people are looking for, we'll definitely want to help them.”

New Yorkers can “found” a Chariot route by going to Chariot.com/routes.

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Jewish Facilities In Queens Get Federal Funds To Improve Security

By Gina Martinez

[Times Ledger](#), October 10, 2017

U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-Flushing) has announced Jewish facilities in Queens will be getting \$450,000 in federal funds to improve security.

The funding is coming after a citywide increase in threats and attacks against Jewish schools, synagogues and organizations.

Breast Cancer - NYCHHealth - MetroPlus

The funds are being allocated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides non-profit organizations with funding for security enhancements, Meng said.

For non-profits to qualify for NSGP funds they must face a high risk of a terrorist attack. The six facilities receiving the \$75,000 in funding include the Jewish Institute of Queens, in Elmhurst; Bais Yaakov Academy of Queens, in Kew Gardens; Beth Gavriel Bukharian Congregation, in Forest Hills; Central Queens YM & YWHA, in Forest Hills; Queens Yeshiva Ketana, in Fresh Meadows; and the Temple Gates of Prayer, in Flushing.

“With anti-Semitic incidents on the rise, it is critical that Jewish institutions have appropriate resources to protect their properties, and this funding will go a long way towards helping these Queens facilities guard against threats and attacks,” Meng said. “The safety and security of students, organization members and congregation members must be the top priority of any school, organization or synagogue. I am pleased that our borough is receiving its fair share of these critical and very competitive federal grants.”

According to the congresswoman, funding from the grants can go towards physical barriers, gates, safety gear, surveillance equipment and other security measures. Meng, who serves on the House Appropriations Committee, helped secure an increase in funding for the NSGP initiative, doubling the amount from \$25 million in 2017 to \$50 million for 2018.

In April, the NYPD announced there was a 55 percent spike in hate crimes in the city compared to that time last year. NYPD officials attributed the jump to a 94 percent rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes in particular. The 107th Precinct increased security during Passover in synagogues in Fresh Meadows. Since the beginning of 2017, at least 91 Jewish organizations across the country, including schools and Jewish community centers, have been the target of 116 bomb threats, 15 of which were made against Jewish locations in New York state.

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OTHER NEW JERSEY NEWS

Surviving Sandy Author Speaks Oct. 20 at NJ Maritime Museum Program

[The SandPaper](#), October 9, 2017

The New Jersey Maritime Museum's first post-season presentation will be given on Friday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. at Buckalew's Restaurant and Tavern in Beach Haven. Admission is free, but donations to the museum are accepted.

Guest speaker Scott Mazzella will discuss his book, *Surviving Sandy – Long Beach Island and the Greatest Storm of the Jersey Shore*, as well as how the superstorm still affects the area five years later.

Mazzella's talk will include his concept for writing the book, gathering stories from storm survivors, and displaying and describing their experiences through a collection of more than 250 photographs. He said he would show how Sandy tracked from its origin in the Atlantic, initially becoming a hurricane but then morphing into a superstorm as it moved north but then veered west with a bull's eye pointed at the Jersey Shore.

"There was a high-pressure system to our north and a deepening trough to the west, which pulled Sandy perpendicular to us," said Mazzella, a history teacher at the Jonas Salk Middle School in Old Bridge. "While it caused a lot of damage to LBI, it was quite worse farther up the shore and areas of Staten Island and Queens in New York. That's what made it an historic storm."

He said one of the legacies of Sandy is how it revolutionized storm warnings through Facebook and other social media outlets.

"People are better prepared today in the event of a major storm," said Mazzella. "I think Sandy woke a lot of people up who didn't think the Jersey Shore would ever be impacted by a hurricane."

He said he would also look at this year's hurricane season, which brought very destructive storms through hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Jose.

“They were making landfall one after another,” he said. “This has been a most unusual hurricane season.”

For reservations or additional information, call the museum at 609-492-0202.

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HURRICANE SEASON

Nate Remnants Drench Northeast; Most Power Back On In South

[Associated Press](#), October 9, 2017

BILOXI, Miss. (AP) — Remnants of Hurricane Nate buffeted the U.S. Northeast with wind and rain Monday while power crews restored most electrical service on the Gulf Coast and an overdue cruise ship delayed by the storm finally headed into port.

With the center of the tropical depression located near the eastern shore of Lake Erie, forecasters said parts of Pennsylvania and New York could receive 2 inches (5 centimeters) of rain or more. Police in Amherst, New York, shared photos of water covering some roads.

Meanwhile, in the Southeast, utilities said crews had restored electrical service to all but a few thousand of the more than 100,000 homes and businesses that lost power because of Nate in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida.

Stuck in the Gulf of Mexico for two days because of Nate, the Carnival Fantasy began moving toward its berth after the Coast Guard reopened the port of Mobile, Alabama. The ship originally was supposed to dock on Saturday after a five-day trip; it was due in at 4 p.m. Monday.

Some passengers complained about the unscheduled delay on social media, but Carnival spokeswoman Christine De La Huerta said the ship had plenty of provisions and would return when able.

The ship has a total guest capacity of 2,056 people and carries a crew of 920.

Dramatic scene as storm surge floods Biloxi casino car park

At Dauphin Island, Alabama, Mayor Jeff Collier said workers were using heavy equipment to remove as much as 6 feet (1.8 meters) of sand that washed across a more than 3-mile (4.8-kilometer) stretch of the island’s main road and more than 20 side streets.

“It moved the beachfront on to the roadway,” said Collier. Also on the Alabama coast, workers were fixing a more than 1,500-foot-long (457-meter-long) fishing pier that was damaged by Nate.

Mississippi’s worst damage was in coastal Jackson County, where Emergency Manager Earl Etheridge said officials have received reports of about 200 damaged buildings. Some had flooding from storm surge, he said, but most had roof damage from high winds.

County and state officials also are investigating barrels and large containers that washed ashore and may be holding hazardous chemicals, he said.

Ruth Adams, a Massachusetts native riding out her first hurricane in her beach house in Jackson County near Ocean Springs, said Nate stripped off her metal roof.

“The one thing I have learned is, I don’t intend to stay even for a Category 1,” said Adams, whose house on a narrow strip of land was cut off by rising waters.

No storm-related deaths or injuries were immediately reported in the United States, but Nate left at least 22 people dead in Central America.

The Hurricane Center said a depression in the open Atlantic had strengthened into Tropical Storm Ophelia on Monday, but the system didn't pose any threat to land.

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Brock Long On FEMA's Response To Hurricane Nate (VIDEO)

[Fox News](#), October 8, 2017

Oct. 08, 2017 – 3:21 – FEMA administration provides insight on 'Fox & Friends' about latest relief efforts.

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FEMA Chief Says Hurricanes This Year Have Already “Strained” Resources

[Associated Press](#), October 8, 2017

NEW ORLEANS —

The head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency said the hurricanes that have struck the U.S. and its territories this year — four so far — have “strained” resources.

FEMA Administrator Brock Long told ABC's “This Week” that some 85 percent of the agency's forces were deployed and still working on issues created by hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria and now Nate.

He said that “in regards to resources, of course we're strained” because “nearly 85 percent of my entire agency is deployed right now. We're still working massive issues in Harvey, Irma, as well as the issues in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and now this one.”

Nate struck the U.S. as a Category 1 storm on Saturday but has since weakened substantially. The National Hurricane Center in Miami downgraded the storm to “tropical depression” strength and discontinued all hurricane and storm surge warnings and watches for the Gulf Coast.

Winds gusts of tropical storm force were expected over the Florida Panhandle and portions of Alabama and Georgia on Sunday, the hurricane center said. Water levels remained elevated along portions of the northern Gulf Coast, but were expected to gradually subside by midday Sunday.

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INSURANCE and LEGAL

FEMA Flood Map Changes Subject Of Next Environmental Lecture At Ocean City Library

By Anthony Bellano

[Patch.com](#), October 9, 2017

OCEAN CITY, NJ — Ocean City residents can learn about the new FEMA flood insurance rate maps and what impact the changes have on their property during a free lecture at the Ocean City Free Public Library on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 6:30 p.m.

Ocean City Chief Financial Officer and Emergency Management Coordinator Frank Donato will lead the discussion, and will also talk about what steps residents should take to make sure they are prepared for storm events.

The lecture, which is part of the Environmental Lecture Series sponsored by the Ocean City Environmental Commission in partnership with the library, will be held in the Chris Maloney Lecture Hall. For more information, call 609-399-2434, ext. 5222.

Ocean City Council recently approved a proposed ordinance to adopt the updates to the maps, which were from 1984. Since they were initially issued, FEMA has released updated advisory maps that apply to new construction and substantially renovated homes in Ocean City. Officials say the change won't have a substantial impact on insurance premiums.

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In Aftermath Of Hurricanes, FEMA's Slow Flood Mapping Leaves Homeowners Vulnerable

By Alison Spann

[The Hill](#), October 9, 2017

The government's disaster preparedness agency has failed to map flood risks in U.S. communities in a timely manner, leaving many vulnerable homeowners with a false security that they don't need flood insurance, the Homeland Security Department's internal watchdog warns.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has delayed decisions on flood zone determinations — in some cases by two years or more — and currently has more than 240 mapping projects on hold, the department's inspector general warned in a report dated Sept. 27.

As a result, only 42 percent of FEMA's flood risk database is currently up to date, meaning more than half of the country's flood map miles need to be revised, the review found. The agency's stated goal is to have 80 percent of its flood maps current.

“Without accurate floodplain identification and mapping processes, management, and oversight, FEMA cannot provide members of the public with a reliable rendering of their true flood vulnerability or ensure that [National Flood Insurance Program] rates reflect the real risk of flooding,” the report said.

The findings suggest that many people across the country may not understand the risks that their homes face from flooding, a fact underlined by the series of hurricanes that have hit the United States this season.

Hurricane Harvey's devastation in Texas in late August provides a cogent example.

The University of California, Davis Center for Watershed Sciences said its analysis of flood data after Harvey found that the majority of the flooded areas in Houston's Harris County were outside FEMA's declared risk areas.

“Over 50% of estimated inundation occurred outside of any mapped flood zone,” it reported last month.

Mapping data released by FEMA shows that at least a third of structures initially reported damaged by flooding as of Sept. 2 were outside declared flood zones. Some members of Texas's congressional delegation estimate as many as 85 percent of victims in the state were without flood insurance when the epic storm hit.

"The recent flooding in Texas after Hurricane Harvey serves as a devastating example of the importance of accurate and reliable flood maps," Inspector General John Roth said. "We are optimistic that our recommended changes will improve FEMA's management of the flood mapping program and introduce internal controls to ensure the quality of the maps produced by FEMA's partners."

FEMA flood maps are used by the government and insurance companies to evaluate flood risk and calculate insurance premiums or insurance eligibility.

The agency says it knows it must do better but that Harvey's damage in Texas must be evaluated with the reality that the storm's magnitude was historic.

"The recent storms, which in many cases exceeded FEMA's data-backed assessments of the areas that have a 1-in-100 risk of flooding in any given year, were strong evidence of the fact that anywhere it can rain, it can flood," the agency said in a statement.

That's little solace, however, to homeowners without the insurance now to cover their losses or the lawmakers that represent them in Congress.

"I think I saw 85 percent of the folks did not have flood insurance. A lot of them, as you said, were told they were not in a flood area," Rep. Roger Williams (R-Texas) told The Hill. "A 100-year floodplain is what everybody deals with. This appears to be a 500-year, so these are going to be issues that are going to have to be sorted out."

Asked what may need to be done, Williams answered: "Eventually we're going to have to remap and redo these kinds of things so this doesn't happen again."

But before that new effort begins, FEMA has to still catch up and update a mapping system that it admits suffered from inadequacies.

The agency says it is strongly committed to giving the public good risk data and that it has "made significant progress developing and implementing several flood-related policy and program changes."

It agreed with recommendations listed by the inspector general, which include adopting policies that would ensure mapping projects move forward on a timely basis.

Until those problems are fixed, flood-vulnerable homeowners may be left in the dark, a reality that has members of Congress scrambling for long-term solutions.

"There are a lot of legal issues that are going to come up," said Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Texas). "So we have been working with the state and the locals but it has been, as you know, it's not something that is going to be done overnight. It's going to take a while."

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SPANISH

FEMA Ha Desembolsado \$27.4 Millones A Los Damnificados

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 6, 2017

El director para Puerto Rico y el Caribe de la Agencia federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (Fema, por sus siglas en inglés), Alejandro de La Campa, dijo hoy que su agencia le da "un adelanto inicial" -que puede ser de \$500- a las personas afectadas por el huracán María que solicitan ayuda y son elegibles.

“Eso es parte del proceso nuestro de asistencia donde las personas solicitan y a base de lo catastrófico que ha sido este evento, estamos proveyendo ayuda. Pero tienen que ser personas que hayan sufrido daños en sus hogares”, precisó el funcionario federal.

“Tenemos distintas cantidades que se van a estar dando a las familias dependiendo de los daños. Incluso, de las primeras ayudas que nosotros damos es para que puedan alquilar un lugar”, abundó.

Otra de las ayudas que proveen es la repartición de toldos livianos. De esos, Fema ha entregado más de 10,000. Estos toldos no son los que instala el Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos en residencias que hayan perdido sus techos. Ese proceso de instalación, comenzó ayer, según se informó.

Los \$500 que provee Fema solo es para familias elegibles que soliciten ayuda y que hayan tenido daños a consecuencia del huracán, reiteró De La Campa. Esa ayuda inicial es provista por Fema antes de que un inspector acuda a la residencia a revisar los daños.

Al momento, Fema ha recibido 203,111 solicitudes y ha desembolsado \$27.4 millones como parte del programa de asistencia pública (a los municipios).

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Precisa FEMA La Forma De Inscribirse Para Solicitar Asistencia Por Desastre

[El Vocero de Puerto Rico](#), October 7, 2017

La Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA) sugirió hoy los procedimientos que deben seguir los ciudadanos que han sufrido daños o pérdidas materiales causados directamente por el huracán María.

La entidad federal sugirió que se puede solicitar asistencia por desastre, incluso si tiene un seguro, pues es posible que haya ayuda disponible para los daños no asegurados o con seguro insuficiente y si las reclamaciones no se liquidan rápidamente.

Hasta la fecha, indicó FEMA, se han inscrito más de 280,000 sobrevivientes del desastre para solicitar asistencia.

La asistencia federal para dueños de viviendas e inquilinos puede incluir subvenciones para alquiler, vivienda temporal, reparaciones a la vivienda en residencias primarias, así como otras necesidades relacionadas con el desastre.

La ayuda que FEMA proporciona es para las necesidades básicas de los sobrevivientes y es el primer paso para la recuperación relacionada con el huracán María, que golpeó a Puerto Rico el pasado 20 de septiembre.

La Agencia Federal para el Desarrollo de la Pequeña Empresa (SBA, siglas en inglés) también ofrece préstamos con intereses bajos por las pérdidas para bienes personales, propiedades inmuebles y negocios.

Para comenzar el proceso de la solicitud se sugiere tener a su disposición:

- * Su dirección con código postal
- * Instrucciones de cómo llegar a su propiedad
- * Condición de su casa dañada
- * Información sobre seguros, si la tiene disponible
- * Número del Seguro Social
- * Número de teléfono al que se le pueda contactar
- * Dirección donde puede recibir correo

* Depósito Directo:

Los fondos de asistencia en desastres se pueden enviar directamente a su cuenta bancaria, por lo que es importante que se proporcione el tipo de cuenta bancaria, número de cuenta y número de ruta bancaria

Manténgase en contacto con FEMA:

* Después de inscribirse, se le dará un número de inscripción de FEMA

* Asegúrese de escribir su número y guardarlo

* Necesitará el número siempre que se ponga en contacto con FEMA

Una vez completado el proceso de inscripción, recibirá una llamada de FEMA para dar seguimiento. Un inspector programará una cita para visitar su hogar. Los inspectores contratados por FEMA no requerirán información de la cuenta bancaria.

La misión de FEMA es apoyar a los ciudadanos y a las agencias de primera respuesta para garantizar que trabajen juntos para desarrollar, mantener y mejorar la capacidad de prepararse.

La asistencia de recuperación por desastre está disponible sin distinción de raza, color, religión, nacionalidad, sexo, edad, discapacidad, conocimiento de inglés o situación económica.

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Tras Retirar Los Datos De Su Web, FEMA Vuelve A Dar Estadísticas Sobre El Acceso A Agua Potable Y Electricidad En Puerto Rico

By Alejandra Vargas Morera

[Univision](#), October 6, 2017

Estos dos datos fundamentales desaparecieron de la página que documenta la respuesta de la agencia federal del manejo de emergencias en la isla. Sin explicación y tras el reporte que en principio publicó The Washington Post, este viernes volvieron a colocar esa información.

La falta de agua potable y electricidad en Puerto Rico tras el paso devastador del huracán María han puesto a la isla en una situación de crisis humanitaria. A las críticas de las autoridades locales sobre la lentitud en la ayuda, marcada la polémica entre la alcaldesa de San Juan y el presidente Donald Trump, podría sumarse otra más: la falta de transparencia.

El diario The Washington Post fue el primero en reportar que los datos de acceso a agua potable y electricidad fueron eliminados de la página web de la Agencia de Gestión para Emergencias (FEMA) que reúne los avances de la respuesta federal a la emergencia. Hasta el miércoles la mitad de los 3.6 millones de habitantes de Puerto Rico no tenía agua potable y tan sólo un 5% había recuperado la electricidad, más de dos semanas después del paso del huracán que dañó por completo la red eléctrica. Para el jueves, los datos ya no estaban allí. Luego del reporte, sin embargo, este viernes por la tarde el portal de la agencia volvió a tener los datos sobre agua y electricidad.

Un portavoz de FEMA, William Booher, indicó al periódico que esa información está recogida en otra página web oficial de la oficina del gobernador de Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, pero no explicó por qué habían dejado de incluirse en el reporte general de la ayuda federal.

“Nuestra misión es apoyar al gobernador y sus prioridades de respuesta a través de la estructura de mando unificada para ayudar a los puertorriqueños a recuperarse y volver a la rutina”, indicó al diario Booher, que defendió que en cualquier caso los datos están disponibles y abiertos al público en la otra web.

Los datos que sí se mantienen allí son los de los trabajos que están llevando a cabo el gobierno.

Según FEMA, actualmente hay 14,000 empleados federales en Puerto Rico y las Islas Vírgenes, todos los aeropuertos y oficinas de correo federales están abiertos, han limpiado más de 30 millas de carretera. Además, el 65% de las tiendas de comestibles han reabierto y casi todos los hospitales y centros de diálisis, agregan.

El presidente Trump, que visitó la isla el martes, ha asegurado que el trabajo federal ha sido “increíble” y “exitoso”, mientras la alcaldesa de San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz, se ha convertido en el símbolo del enfado de Puerto Rico.

Ambos se enzarzaron en una disputa dialéctica después de que Cruz suplicara ayuda ante los problemas para distribuir la ayuda sobre el terreno y, después de diez días sin energía eléctrica, denunciara: “Estamos muriendo y nos están matando con su ineficiencia y burocracia”.

“Quieren que les resuelvan todo, cuando debería ser un esfuerzo de la comunidad. Los trabajadores federales presentes en la isla están haciendo un excelente trabajo”, contestó Trump, quien durante su visita dijo que Puerto Rico debería estar orgulloso de que solo murieran 16 personas, a diferencia de la “catástrofe real” de Katrina, que dejó un saldo de 1,800 muertos. Poco después de las palabras del mandatario, el gobernador Roselló anunciaba que el balance de muertos aumentaba a 34.

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Sin Luz Y Sin Agua: Así Es La Vida Cotidiana De Los Puertorriqueños Dos Semanas Después Del Huracán María

By Patricia Clarembaux

[Univision](#), October 6, 2017

PUERTO RICO.- Las rutinas de los puertorriqueños están trastocadas desde que el huracán María devastó todo cuanto pudo en esta isla hace dos semanas. La falta de agua y luz –o de al menos de uno de ellos– les ha reducido las comidas, los ha llevado a bañarse en casas de familiares e incluso mantiene negocios cerrados. Y en algunos casos no tenerlos es el menor de los problemas: hay viviendas que quedaron destruidas.

Poco a poco Puerto Rico intenta volver a su ritmo. Ya muchos han regresado al trabajo, pero igual deben lidiar con lo esencial, buscan incansablemente agua, comida –la que haya– y diésel, para mantener las plantas encendidas y al menos librarse de los 90 grados de temperatura al prender el aire acondicionado.

Las kilométricas filas de las gasolineras han bajado, es cierto. Pero en las calles se mantienen las líneas de personas esperando a la entrada de manantiales naturales a la orilla de cualquier carretera para llenar una, dos, o cuantas botellas de agua puedan para hidratarse y bañarse.

Según la Autoridad Eléctrica de Luz, apenas 9% de la isla tiene electricidad en su casa. Y a 54,6% le llegó el agua, reportó Acueducto. Para el miércoles, las estadísticas de la agencia federal para el manejo de desastres (FEMA) mostraban que solo el 5% de los residentes tenía luz y la mitad de la población había recuperado el acceso a agua potable. Los datos habían sido retirados el jueves de la página web, pero este viernes luego de que medios informaran que las estadísticas ya no estaban, el portal de la agencia volvió a incluir la información.

Hicimos un recorrido por tres municipios del centro-norte de Puerto Rico y estas son las historias de sus habitantes:

Recuperando lo que quedó tras la inundación

Toda la planta baja de la casa de dos pisos de Margarita García, en Sabana Seca, municipio Toa Baja, quedó sumergida bajo el agua con el huracán María. La nevera y la cocina todavía llevan pintado el borde marrón de tierra que le dejó la inundación. Ella no sabe qué hará: “Hasta que no llegue la luz no puedo saber si prenden o si también tengo que botarlas”.

En la acera frente a su casa está todo lo que descartaron. Hay un sofá, dos sillones, colchones, un gavetero, un equipo de sonido, mucha madera arrumada y tan destruida que no tiene forma de nada. En su casa prácticamente no quedó nada. Y así está toda la cuadra en este barrio humilde, llena de los enseres que desecharon sus vecinos.

Ya lograron limpiar el piso de cerámica de la sala, en la planta baja, porque llegó el agua hace cinco días. Brilla como si no hubiese pasado nada y huele a Mistolín. Allí duermen en colchones inflables, con calor y al acecho de los mosquitos, ella, sus tres nietos, su hija y su yerno.

Pero arriba el desastre que dejó María está intacto. Las hojas secas y las ramas hacen una alfombra en el suelo. El techo de zinc de su cuarto se cayó parcialmente, huele a humedad. “No sé qué decirte, no sé si tendré que botarlo todo. Tengo que terminar primero abajo”, explica resignada. “Básicamente lo hemos perdido todo”.

La familia completa no desperdicia ni un momento del día para limpiar porque sin luz en la noche, cuentan que la zona se convierte en una “boca de lobo”. Sin nevera no tienen dónde guardar la comida que les donan, porque tampoco tienen a dónde comprarla: “Yo no he comido nada hoy (...) pero si no llega ninguna ayuda hay que basarse en lo que a uno le queda”.

Un enfermo en cama que espera paciente

Ramón Martínez, de 80 años, está postrado en una cama desde hace un año. Sufre de esclerosis y solo puede mover su cabeza. Su casa quedó sin agua ni luz tras el golpe del huracán María, pero al menos el miércoles habían podido mantener encendida la planta para prender el aire acondicionado, para recargar la máquina que le permite respirar cómodamente al dormir, la silla para movilizarlo y para poder reclinar más la cama clínica.

Pero este jueves se les acabó el diesel y el distribuidor no había llegado cuando casi eran las siete de la noche. Lo esperan desde el domingo. “Lo más grave es que puedan salirle úlceras”, cuenta su hija Margie Martínez al mostrar que tanto las ventanas como la puerta principal están abiertas de par en par. “Ahora mismo tiene un hongo en el área genital y el no tener agua y aire acondicionado se lo puede empeorar”.

Desde la cama, el padre replica en una voz apenas audible: “No tengo televisor, no tengo nada, uno lo pasa incómodo. Pero hay que adaptarse y aceptar lo que hay”.

La familia tiene agua suficiente para bañarlo –pero a la velocidad de cada envase de mantequilla–, y para darle de tomar. Antes del huracán compraron botellones de agua potable y, además, llenaron varios recipientes plásticos de a galón hasta el tope. Para bajar los baños usan el agua de la piscina, que pasó de ser cristalina a verde tras la devastación que dejó María.

A pesar de todo, aseguran, continuarán bregando.

La salvación: un manantial de la familia

Eliana Rodríguez es una mujer ágil a pesar de sus 82 años. No tiene agua ni luz desde que el huracán Irma pasó por la isla, hace un mes. Aún así resuelve. Cada mañana a las 6:00 am se levanta y camina los 15 minutos que hay desde su casa en Santa Juanita, en el municipio Bayamón, hasta el manantial de la familia y se trae sus dos botellones de agua a cuestas. Esa es

la que se bebe, ninguna otra. También es con la que prepara sus comidas y le hace café al vecino de al lado, en agradecimiento porque le da luz con una planta generadora.

“Ese manantial está allí desde que yo nací”, dice al reconocer su privilegio. Cuenta que otros habitantes de la zona han llegado hasta la reja que resguarda el riachuelo suplicando que les permitan tomar un poco de agua y ellos los dejan.

Para bañarse o para fregar los platos utiliza un agua que su yerno le trae de otro manantial. También aprovecha cuando comienza la lluvia y pone a llenar un tanque plástico que tiene en la parte trasera de su casa.

“Me baño todos los días. Las mujeres tenemos que bañarnos todos los días”, asegura y se ríe. Dice que se mete dentro del tobo para no desperdiciar ni una gota de agua y luego, con lo que resta, lava los baños.

La comida no le preocupa. Esta acostumbrada a su pan por la mañana y a su arroz con leche por la tarde. Y lavar su ropa tampoco le quita el sueño, pues dice que tiene mucha y que la sucia la va acumulando. Pero todo lo demás la tiene en un solo refunfuño. “Esto es una novela de horror”.

Parados en la casa, parados en el trabajo

Los Figueroa están todos en la tintorería de la familia, la Joe’s Cleaners, en el municipio Bayamón. El negocio está parado porque no tienen agua ni luz y sin eso tampoco hay clientes. Entre los padres y los hijos, los únicos que tienen agua son los primeros. Así que esa casa se ha convertido casi en un centro de operaciones. De allí sale el agua con la que intentan llenar los tanques de 500 galones de la tintorería para reabrir el lugar al menos por un día; con la que se bañan casi todos; con la que cocinan.

“Esto es agobiante”, dice Ángel Figueroa, de 51 años, al mostrar en la penumbra las pilas de ropa para lavar y planchar que se quedaron arrumadas desde antes de que María golpeará la isla caribeña y que, ahora, acomodan para tenerlas listas en caso de que llegue alguno de los servicios. “Sufrimos nosotros, pero también los empleados que todos los días nos preguntan si hay trabajo, si llegó la luz. Nuestra mayor pérdida es el negocio”.

Para comer los más afectados son los padres, Aída y José, de 72 y 76 años. No tienen luz en su residencia, así que desde inicios de septiembre han tenido que desayunar rebanadas de pan solas –porque no hay nevera para refrigerar los embutidos–; almorzar cualquier cosa en la calle, hamburguesas, por ejemplo; cenar lo que se pueda y beber agua a temperatura ambiente. “Estamos pasando trabajo”, dice él. “No está fácil”, agrega y rompe en llanto.

José dice que para lavar su ropa volvieron a tiempos remotos: a mano. Pero solo con cosas pequeñas, ni los pantalones ni las camisas. “Estamos sobreviviendo”, agrega ella, aunque reconoce que hay gente que puede estar peor que ellos.

Una casa reducida a un cuarto

Carmen Ríos, de 64 años, quedó confinada prácticamente a su cuarto y a un minúsculo patio lateral. El huracán María voló casi todo el techo de la casa de madera en Maguayo, municipio Dorado. Se llevó el del baño, el de la cocina –incluso con los gabinetes–, el del cuarto de su nieto, el del pasillo central. Lo único que quedó sujeto a las vigas de madera del techo, fueron dos lámparas. A pesar del destrozo ella asegura que se queda en su casa. Cuando cae la noche cierra la puerta plástica corrediza de su cuarto y se encomienda a dios. Vive sola.

“Agarro una lamparita de batería que tengo y un faro como de gas. Con eso me alumbro en el cuarto y para bañarme. Me baño tardecito porque sí tengo agua”, cuenta. “Luego me acuesto, pero como a las 3:00 am estoy sentada aquí afuera, desvelada”.

La comida la está comprando al día. Y así mismo la prepara en una pequeña cocina que improvisó en un pasillo lateral de la casa. Convirtió la lavadora y un freezer en topes y sobre una mesa montó una pequeña estufa a gas. Este jueves comieron un bistec encebollado y arroz con habichuelas.

Carmen Ríos asegura que pasa el día llorando al ver el desastre en que quedó convertida su casa, que además acababa de remodelar. No sabe si podrá reconstruirla. Dice que todo depende de la ayuda que pueda recibir de la Agencia de Gestión de Desastres (FEMA). De lo que sí está segura es que allí se quedará, aunque sus hijos intenten convencerla de que se mude con ellos. “¿Tú crees que con 64 años me voy a estar yendo? No. Mejor me quedo aquí y que sea lo que dios quiera”.

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Estados Unidos Militariza Esfuerzo De Asistencia En Puerto Rico Tras Problemas De Distribución

By Tim Johnson

[McClatchy](#), October 9, 2017

Mientras soldados norteamericanos entregaban el domingo cajas de alimentos y agua en esta localidad costera, un funcionario federal dijo que está satisfecho con lo que se ha logrado hasta ahora.

“Parecen estar contentos en este momento. Creo que va muy bien”, dijo Patrick Hernández, administrador adjunto de operaciones de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA).

A poca distancia, mirando hacia la operación de distribución a través de una cerca, Serafin Román ofreció una versión radicalmente diferente de la situación: “Es algo terrible. La gente está desesperada. No tienen agua. Algunos están pasando hambre”.

Las dos opiniones radicalmente opuestas no hacen sino señalar el abismo que hay entre el punto de vista oficial sobre los esfuerzos de recuperación tras el devastador paso del huracán María y lo que piensa el hombre de a pie. En algunas partes de Puerto Rico, al entrar en la tercera semana de los esfuerzos de recuperación, algunos puertorriqueños dicen sentirse olvidados y vulnerables. A menudo, los vecinos y los funcionarios locales cuentan versiones drásticamente diferentes sobre la frecuencia de distribución de los alimentos.

Como respuesta ante la grave crisis, los militares estadounidenses explicaron el domingo la forma en la que cambiará la distribución de alimentos, agua y gasolina en muchas de las 78 municipalidades de la isla: van a militarizar las labores de asistencia de una manera significativa después que algunos alcaldes no pudieron con el esfuerzo.

Antes de este fin de semana, se entregaban suministros en 10 áreas regionales de la isla, y entonces los alcaldes eran responsables de organizar la recogida y la distribución.

Pero el general José J. Reyes, jefe adjunto de la Guardia Nacional de Puerto Rico, dijo en una entrevista que se puso en marcha una nueva estrategia para situar entre 10 y 20 soldados en cada municipalidad, dándoles vehículos y apoyo logístico, con la tarea de entregar los suministros en cada barrio.

“Necesitamos entrar directamente a cada barrio para asegurar que todos reciben suministros”, dijo Reyes. “Tendrán vehículos, comunicaciones por radio y apoyo logístico... Van a vivir ahí. Van a operar 24/7”.

En las 10 ciudades más grandes de Puerto Rico, cada una con una población mayor de 150,000 habitantes, los ayuntamientos seguirán administrando la distribución, dijo Reyes, pero no en localidades más pequeñas.

El jefe de los servicios de asistencia, el teniente general del Ejército Jeffrey S. Buchanan, reconoció que la distribución de ayuda a nivel municipal no siempre se ha hecho de manera efectiva.

“Hemos trabajado duro para identificar cuellos de botella”, dijo Buchanan en un aeropuerto de San Juan antes de subir a un helicóptero con rumbo a Aguadilla, unas 80 millas al oeste de la capital.

“No debemos pretender que va a ser un proceso perfecto”, dijo, señalando que los alcaldes tienen retos a la hora de distribuir la ayuda, como carreteras dañadas, falta de vehículos, malas comunicaciones y áreas grandes con poca población.

El descontento era evidente el domingo en un centro de distribución de agua y alimentos en Aguadilla. Sin embargo, esa frustración no se ve en todas partes. Algunas municipalidades están organizando las labores de asistencia y recuperación mejor que otras. Entre las zonas más azotadas por la catastrófica tormenta del 20 de septiembre, algunas están tan alejadas que es necesario entregar la ayuda en helicóptero porque las carreteras están intransitables.

“Hay personas que viven en áreas montañosas en la región central y allí es más difícil llegar, pero estamos tratando de llegar a todos”, dijo Hernández. Los equipos de militares “están haciendo una labor fenomenal limpiando y despejando las vías de acceso”.

Hernández le restó importancia a la ira expresada por algunos vecinos, afirmando que los sobrevivientes de un desastre de esta magnitud quieren que la vida regrese a la normalidad.

“Todos los sobrevivientes de una catástrofe semejante se sienten así”, dijo.

Sheila Lenox, de 29 años, dijo que la caja de comida que recibió el domingo es la primera comida importante que ha visto desde el huracán.

“Esta es la primera vez que nos dan una caja llena de comida”, dijo Lenox, quien está desempleada. “Hemos estado comiendo lo que nos daban los vecinos”.

Cuando se le preguntó cómo habían sobrevivido, Jetson Samot, pareja de Lenox, respondió: “Con salchichas y galletas”. “No podemos comprar nada. Los supermercados han subido los precios de todo. Es muy difícil encontrar algo de comer. Tenemos un lugar donde vivir, pero nada para alimentarnos”, dijo Lenox.

Otra vecina, Carmen Santiago, retirada de 67 años, dijo que deseaba que hubiera más disciplina y lógica en la distribución para evitar que algunos vecinos reciban mucho y otros nada.

Cuando se le dijo que algunos vecinos se quejaron de que eran los primeros alimentos y agua que recibían, el alcalde Carlos Méndez puso en duda esa afirmación.

“Ya habían recibido alimentos antes. He venido aquí tres o cuatro veces y puedo atestiguarlo”, dijo Méndez.

Méndez dijo que las labores de asistencia “empezaron con lentitud pero ahora van bien”.

“Todo el mundo tiene sed, todo el mundo tiene hambre porque no reciben comida todos los días. Pero por lo menos reciben cada cuatro o cinco días”.

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Aseguran Que Lluvias En Puerto Rico Dificultan Entrega De Ayuda Tras “María”

[El Universal \(MEX\)](#), October 9, 2017

Las fuertes lluvias que se registran en Puerto Rico dificultan la entrega de suministros a los damnificados por el huracán María, que devastó las infraestructuras de electricidad y telecomunicaciones de la isla caribeña.

La Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (Fema) informó hoy a través de un comunicado de que debido a las lluvias torrenciales y la saturación del terreno puede que las aeronaves que llevan la ayuda a la población no puedan aterrizar, por lo que se advierte de que la carga podría lanzarse desde el aire.

El comunicado subraya que, una vez que el tiempo mejore, las aeronaves volverán a depositar los suministros, principalmente agua y comida, en tierra, tal y como se ha hecho durante los últimos días.

El Servicio Nacional de Meteorología en San Juan emitió una advertencia de inundaciones para más de 20 municipios ante las fuertes lluvias y tormentas que se esperan durante las próximas horas, en especial para áreas del interior, el este y la capital, San Juan.

La agencia federal ha emitido además una vigilancia de inundaciones repentinas para todo Puerto Rico hasta la tarde del miércoles por la presencia en la región de una onda tropical que se unirá a una vaguada ya estacionada al norte de la isla caribeña.

La previsión de fuertes lluvias durante los dos próximos días sigue a las inundaciones registradas el domingo, que afectaron con especial virulencia al área metropolitana de San Juan.

Durante el domingo en algunas partes de la capital se registraron hasta cuatro pulgadas de lluvia, lo que provocó la inundación de calles, en especial en el distrito sanjuanero de Santurce.

Corrimientos de tierras y cortes de carreteras se registraron en los municipios de San Juan, Carolina y Vega Baja, en la costa norte.

El riesgo para hoy es grande, ya que las lluvias se registrarán sobre los suelos ya saturados y en áreas donde permanecen gran cantidad de escombros acumulados tras el pase del huracán María por la isla hace casi tres semanas.

El gobernador de Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, denunció hoy que la alta acumulación de escombros en las calles de la capital facilitó las inundaciones en San Juan, que obligaron a la intervención de los Bomberos y otras agencias federales que ayudan en la labor de reconstrucción tras el paso del huracán María.

Rosselló sostuvo que a diferencia de lo que pasa en San Juan, en otros municipios de la isla sí se han retirado los escombros que obstruyen el paso del agua por los desagües.

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Lo Que Discutirá Jenniffer González Con El Vicepresidente Mike Pence

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 6, 2017

El Second Air Force con el vicepresidente de Estados Unidos, Mike Pence, aterrizó esta tarde en Puerto Rico para constatar de primera mano la crítica situación de isla tras el catastrófico paso del huracán María por la isla.

Pence llegó al país acompañado de la comisionada residente en Washington, Jenniffer González, y su arribo se da a tres días de la visita del presidente de Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, junto a parte de su gabinete. Se da también luego de la visita que hicieron a Florida, donde constataron la ola migratoria de boricuas que se está dando a pasos agigantados hacia el estado y en la que en tan solo dos semanas ya se han contabilizado seis mil puertorriqueños que se han ido y 400 niños matriculados en las escuelas, 300 en Orlando y 100 en Kissimmee.

La comisionada residente dijo que se han establecido centros de ayuda de Fema y la Cruz Roja en varios de los aeropuertos de Florida y que en su visita ayer a Orlando vio la llegada de residentes de Trujillo Alto, Carolina, Cabo Rojo, Juncos, Arecibo, Ponce y Corozal.

“Es bien fuerte”, dijo González a El Nuevo Día, quien narró que inmediatamente llegaron ayer a Florida, dos familias de puertorriqueños, una de Guayama y otra de Corozal, los recibieron y les narraron cómo habían perdido sus casas y lo que habían levantado.

Hoy el trayecto de Pence comenzó en Islas Vírgenes y ya aterrizó en Puerto Rico, donde como Trump, le darán un resumen de la situación en Puerto Rico luego del paso de María, el pasado 20 de septiembre, y la devastación que dejó a su paso el ciclón en los 78 municipios de la isla.

La comisionada residente tiene en su agenda del día discutir con Pence varios asuntos relevantes, entre ellos la tardanza en la instalación de los toldos azules en las miles de casas que perdieron sus techos a lo largo y ancho del país.

“Mi agenda hoy con el vicepresidente va a incluir el que mucha de la gente nos dicen que todavía sus casas no tienen el toldo azul, que está lloviendo y que aún están a la intemperie. Eso es una prioridad para mí”, recalcó González tras añadir que obviamente tocará los temas de los sistemas de energía eléctrica y agua.

Según González, hay dos tipos de toldos. Está el más débil, que lo entrega Fema y que no requiere de mayores protocolos y burocracia. Lo datos que le han dado a la comisionada residente es que se han repartido ya 11,000 a los alcaldes, que son los encargados de repartirlos a la gente, así como en Vivienda Pública. El otro tipo de toldo es el azul, que es más fuerte y es instalado por el Cuerpo de Ingenieros.

“Yo entiendo que a la gente no les está llegando”, admitió González.

¿Por qué?

-Esa será mi agenda hoy con el vicepresidente, pedirle que nos ayude en eso. Mi preocupación es que como la gente no tiene Internet, no hay teléfonos, no hay luz, la aplicación de ese toldo es electrónica. Lo que están haciendo los municipios es que están llevando las solicitudes en papel y con esa solicitud de papel, el Cuerpo de Ingenieros las tramita. Sin embargo, no tengo los números de cuántos toldos han instalado, porque es el Cuerpo de Ingenieros al que le toca eso.

-¿Cree que lo que han entregado no va a la par con la necesidad que hay?

-Entiendo que eso no va a la par con la necesidad que hay en la calle y como no va a la par, yo le voy a pedir al vicepresidente Pence hoy que asigne más personal para la instalación de estos toldos, que se flexibilice la manera en que se tramita la obtención de este toldo, que es vital para que a la gente no se le moje lo poco que le queda en la casa. También la cantidad de funciones que está haciendo el Cuerpo de Ingenieros, porque ellos están montando puentes, arreglando carreteras, limpiando escombros, instalando toldos azules y arreglando el sistema eléctrico. Aunque son tropas distintas, la realidad es que esa es una de las áreas (repartición de toldos azules) que yo quiero que se agilice, para lo que voy a buscar la indulgencia del vicepresidente.

¿Hay otras áreas que tocará en sus conversaciones hoy con Pence?

-Hay otra áreas también que creo que son importantes. Ellos están instalando los generadores. Que los generadores que faltan en los hospitales, en las égidas y las bombas de agua, que son acueductos, esas deben ser una prioridad y va a ser una de las cosas que voy a pedir: dónde están y qué nos falta. Si la gente tiene agua, por lo menos puede tener su necesidad básica. Pero sin agua es muy difícil mantener, sobrepasar la situación.

¿Es otro trabajo del Cuerpo de Ingenieros?

-Esos generadores los trajo y los tiene que instalar el Cuerpo de Ingenieros, así que son ellos los que nos tienen que dar esa actualización. Yo sé que el jefe del Cuerpo de Ingenieros está en Puerto Rico. Para eso le pediré al vicepresidente su ayuda, sobre cómo podemos hacer que esto sea más rápido.

¿Hablará sobre los paquetes de fondos que se necesitan?

-Sobre los fondos la Casa Blanca pidió de \$12.77 billones y de \$16 billones de fondo de inundaciones, que es importante porque en la isla hubo muchas inundaciones. Nosotros tenemos que someter el estimado de daños para que podamos acceder a esos fondos rápido. Ese paquete de ayudas debe estar bajando ya la semana que viene.

¿Habrán más?

-Ya el vicepresidente dijo que este no va a ser el único paquete de fondos federales, que vienen otros.

El recorrido en la Isla incluye Country Club y la Iglesia de Santa Bernardita, que es un ministerio amplio de ayuda para suplir las necesidades de los que no tienen y que está bien organizado. De hecho, es de las pocas iglesias que abre las 24 horas y la que González visita con frecuencia, especialmente en horas de la noche.

La comisionada residente en Washington tiene la intención de movilizar a la isla la mayor cantidad de congresistas a Puerto Rico para entiendan el nivel de devastación y de necesidad que hay. De hecho, mañana tiene en agenda otro viaje con un grupo de legisladores federales.

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Ponceños No Quieren Quedar En El Olvido

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 9, 2017

Ponce – “Que se acuerden de nosotros, de la zona rural, que también existimos”.

Con estas palabras, Gerardo Albizu Torres, de 37 años, resumió el sentir de muchos residentes de la zona montañosa de este municipio que, según contaron, no han recibido “ningún tipo de ayuda” a casi tres semanas del paso del huracán María.

Señalaron, incluso, que la alcaldesa María “Mayita” Meléndez es “la gran ausente” en la ruralía ponceña, donde tampoco se observan los toldos azules de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, en inglés). Estos toldos son la única opción que ciudadanos como Albizu Torres tienen para proteger “lo poco que nos queda”.

Albizu Torres perdió la casa que compró en 2001 en el barrio Real Anón. La estructura de madera y zinc se quedó sin techo y todo lo que había en su interior se dañó por la lluvia, que ha seguido cayendo. Ahora, en el espacio de la sala y cocina, el agua empozada es un criadero de mosquitos.

“Sería bueno que vengan las ayudas, pero a los campos no llegan. Está lloviendo todas las tardes y, como todavía no tenemos los toldos de FEMA, todo se sigue mojando”, agregó.

Como el resto de los puertorriqueños, Albizu Torres pasa largas horas en filas para adquirir agua embotellada, alimentos, hielo y gasolina, entre otros bienes de primera necesidad. Mientras la ayuda para restaurar su hogar llega, pernocta en la casa de su padre, de cemento, también en el barrio Real Anón.

“No ha venido nadie para acá, nadie”, dijo, y justo después su hija Geraldine, de 6 años, soltó: “una crisis”.

“No se ha visto por aquí”

“¿Dónde está ‘Mayita’? ‘Mayita’ no se ha visto por aquí para nada”, comentó, por su parte, Michael Guzmán Marrero, de 45 años, mientras se bañaba en el río Inabón, en la colindancia de los barrios Real Anón y Coto Laurel.

Según contó, “en todo Ponce” hay necesidad, pero lo más que urge es agua embotellada. Dijo que recientemente fue hasta Cayey buscando agua y solo pudo comprar un galón, “porque los estaban racionando”.

Historias similares narraron los vecinos del barrio San Patricio, que viajan a Utuado, Jayuya o Adjuntas para buscar suministros. Estos tres pueblos les quedan más cerca que el casco ponceño.

Luis Vélez Bianchi, de 65 años y quien perdió parte del techo de la segunda planta de su casa, declaró que “nadie del gobierno (estatal) ha pasado por aquí y la alcaldesa se ha olvidado del barrio”.

Vélez Bianchi tiene servicio de agua potable, pero no de electricidad. Sobre este último, dijo – entre risas– que espera recobrarlo antes de las navidades del año 2019. En 1998, tras el paso del huracán Georges, estuvo tres meses sin luz, “pero este huracán (María) no tiene comparación”.

“Ustedes (El Nuevo Día) son los primeros que pasan por acá”, indicó, entretanto, Myrna Ríos Mejía, de 48 años, quien vive junto a su madre, de 78 años; hermana, de 50; y cuatro hijos. Los siete pasaron el huracán en los bajos de la residencia, que perdió el techo del baño y los cuartos quedaron “inundados” por la lluvia.

Relató que no ha podido comprar alimentos, ni agua embotellada. Como no tiene electricidad, no ha podido darse las terapias para su condición de asma. A su madre se le están agotando los medicamentos para el dolor.

“No tenemos con quien ir a ningún lado. Los carros que tenemos aquí no sirven. Estamos a fuerza de los guineos del mismo patio. Pero necesitamos ayuda. Los políticos, que siempre pasan buscando votos en época de elecciones, todavía no se han dado la vuelta por aquí”, aseveró Ríos Mejía.

Los esposos Charito Oliveras Collazo y Edwin Laboy Millán, de 31 y 48 años, respectivamente, también se sienten “olvidados” en el sector La Yuca del barrio Machuelo Arriba, donde ellos y otros residentes “abrimos camino” para no quedarse incomunicados.

“Es mentira que la ayuda está llegando. Acá arriba no ha venido nadie. Ni la basura están recogiendo y se están formando muchos vertederos clandestinos”, contó Oliveras Collazo, quien recoge agua en una pluma que los propios vecinos instalaron en una iglesia de la comunidad.

Ninguno de los entrevistados con daños en sus hogares había iniciado formalmente su reclamación ante FEMA.

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Cuerpo De Ingenieros Da Primer Contrato Para Reparar Sistema Eléctrico

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 9, 2017

El Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos (USACE) concedió hoy, lunes, un contrato ascendente a \$35.1 millones a la empresa Weston Solutions para la restauración del sistema eléctrico de Puerto Rico.

Este es el primero de una serie de contratos que concederá el USACE como parte del proceso para restaurar el servicio energético que colapsó tras el azote del huracán María. El 80% del sistema de transmisión y distribución quedó en el piso y el gran reto de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) -en coordinación con el USACE- es satisfacer la gran demanda de luz del norte de la Isla cuando la generación en su mayoría se produce en el sur.

Hoy, el gobernador Ricardo Rosselló informó que 15% de los abonados de la AEE ya cuenta con servicio. Además, recalcó que “paralelo” al restablecimiento de la luz se trabaja con dar paso en un futuro cercano a un nuevo sistema energético.

“Nuestro objetivo no es solamente levantar el mismo sistema que teníamos antes. Levantar el mismo sistema que teníamos antes nos pone en la misma posición de vulnerabilidad. Invertimos un montón de chavos para estar sujetos a que venga otra tormenta y que nos rebase nuevamente. Nuestro objetivo es -paralelo esto- investigar y ver cuál es el mejor sistema que podamos tener en Puerto Rico en términos de generación, que sea moderno y nos permita una real oportunidad para hacer cambios transformativos en el sistema eléctrico en Puerto Rico”, puntualizó Rosselló.

Weston Solutions, una empresa con sede en Pennsylvania, tendrá la misión de proveer generación eléctrica a la planta de generatriz de Palo Seco, en San Juan. Traerá un generador de 50 megavatios que llegará a “Puerto Rico muy pronto”, informó en comunicado de prensa Diana Holland, comandante de la División del Sur del Atlántico del USACE.

La idea es que al proporcionarle generación de emergencia a Palo Seco, más clientes de la AEE recibirán electricidad en lo que se completan las reparaciones a las líneas de transmisión que se conectan a Palo Seco.

“Este es un paso importante en nuestros esfuerzos para restaurar la electricidad a los ciudadanos de Puerto Rico”, dijo Holland.

La reparación del sistema eléctrico incluye cuatro pasos, de acuerdo con el USACE. La primera fase es proveer energía y generación temporera a lugares críticos. La segunda es asegurar una generación adecuada en las centrales eléctricas para luego reinstalar y reparar las líneas de transmisión. Por último, es preciso restaurar y reparar las líneas de distribución.

Tanto los directivos de la USACE como de la Agencia federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, en inglés) han dicho que el restablecimiento total del servicio eléctrico demorará meses.

El director de Operaciones de Contingencia y Seguridad Nacional del USACE, José Sánchez, dijo en entrevista con este diario que la misión que le ha dado FEMA es solo reparar “de emergencia” el sistema eléctrico. Pero ha recalcado que es imperativo evolucionar a un sistema más fuerte.

Ha advertido que ve “difícil” que el restablecimiento de la luz en su totalidad se produzca al cabo de seis a siete meses, parámetro que se ha usado recientemente como referente pues fue el tiempo que tomó hacerlo tras el azote del huracán Georges en 1998. Sin embargo, Sánchez dijo que trabajan a toda capacidad y con contratistas para acelerar el proceso.

Sin embargo, la cantidad de brigadas que posee la AEE, unas 230 -cada una de tres a cuatro personas- no menos que las que había en el pasado. Por eso y ante la emergencia se hacen las contrataciones que la USACE estima serán más de 2,000.

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En Espera Por Un Plan De Reconstrucción Para La Isla

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 9, 2017

WASHINGTON — El Senado estadounidense aguardaría por las recomendaciones de la Junta de Supervisión Fiscal a cargo de las finanzas públicas de Puerto Rico y del gobernador Ricardo Rosselló antes de diseñar un plan que encamine la reconstrucción de la isla.

Tras la devastación causada por el huracán María, ya no parece haber debate sobre la necesidad de algún tipo de rescate financiero del gobierno federal para revivir la economía de Puerto Rico, la cual el ciclón acabó de hundir.

Lo que aún no está claro es qué cosas formarán parte de ese plan, que los demócratas quieren se asemeje al concepto del Plan Marshall con el cual se impulsó la reconstrucción de Europa central después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, por medio de medidas para modernizar su economía.

“Queremos que se rinda cuentas sobre hacia donde ese dinero va a ir”, advirtió ayer el senador republicano Ron Johnson (Wisconsin), presidente del Comité de Seguridad Interna y Asuntos de Gobierno, en una conferencia telefónica de los cinco senadores que estuvieron el sábado observando los daños causados por el huracán María en Puerto Rico.

Desde antes del huracán, economistas, grupos de estudio y sindicatos habían reclamado que aun después de autorizar la reestructuración de la deuda pública, por medio de un nuevo sistema judicial de bancarrota territorial, Puerto Rico necesitaría medidas que ayuden a la economía.

Ahora, demócratas del Senado dicen que eso es inevitable. “Se necesita un plan financiero inmediato”, dijo el senador demócrata Richard Blumenthal (Connecticut), quien dijo desde el punto de vista del Senado su contenido debe salir de conversaciones entre la Junta, el gobernador Rosselló y el Comité de Finanzas, que maneja los temas referentes al Tesoro, Medicaid, y temas contributivos.

El gobernador Rosselló –quien ha estado en conversaciones con el Tesoro–, dijo ayer que requiere una inyección inicial de \$4,600 millones y ha advertido que a finales de este mes el gobierno de Puerto Rico puede quedarse sin dinero en efectivo.

El senador Blumenthal dijo que entendía que la “tormenta financiera” ocurriría a finales de año.

El gobierno de Rosselló ha discutido en Washington, entre otras cosas, la posibilidad de que el Tesoro garantice un préstamo del gobierno de Puerto Rico o que la Reserva federal compre bonos de la isla.

En la conferencia telefónica, la demócrata Kirsten Gillibrand (Nueva York) dijo que “se necesita un plan tipo Plan Marshall no importa lo que tome”. “Se requiere un Plan Marshall no para reparar temporalmente, sino para la recuperación y resiliencia a largo plazo”, sostuvo Blumenthal.

Los republicanos han sido menos contundentes, pero reconocen que se requiere apoyo federal a un plan dirigido a revivir la economía. “Queremos trabajar con el Senado para presentar algo que atienda las necesidades a corto y largo plazo”, indicó el republicano Cory Gardner, presidente del subcomité de Energía de la Comisión de Energía y Recursos Naturales.

Los senadores coincidieron que todo el proceso de reestructuración comienza por restablecer la red eléctrica, para poder facilitar el funcionamiento de los pilares de la economía de Puerto Rico, como la manufactura y el turismo.

“(La red eléctrica) era débil antes de la tormenta, ahora está muy devastada”, sostuvo Johnson.

Esta semana, el Congreso debe aprobar la asignación de \$12,770 millones para volver a llenar las arcas del fondo para atender desastres de la Agencia federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA).

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Llega Un Generador A Culebra Para Un Centro De Salud

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 9, 2017

El generador tenía escrito diversos mensajes con tiza en solidaridad con el pueblo de Culebra.

“Dios los bendiga y los mejores deseos (de la) Guardia Nacional de Puerto Rico”, leía uno de los mensajes.

Un generador de 30 kilovatios, y cuyo peso es de 1,927 libras, aguardaba ayer, domingo, en el interior de un helicóptero de carga Boeing CH-47 Chinook de Pennsylvania, aeronave necesaria para transportar un objeto de dicho tamaño y peso.

Precisamente esa fue una de las razones para que el generador, que debió llegar a la isla municipio antes del paso cercano del huracán María, aún aguardase en la base de Isla Grande. Su destino es el centro de salud HealthproMed 330 ubicado en Culebra.

El coronel de la Guardia Nacional de Puerto Rico, Jorge Galoff, dijo que se enteraron de la urgencia de llevar el generador a Culebra a través de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA). Ivonne Rivera, administradora del centro de salud, se vio en la necesidad de abordar a funcionarios de la agencia luego de pedirle ayuda al secretario de Salud, Rafael Rodríguez Mercado, para llevar el generador a Culebra.

“Nunca recibí respuesta”, dijo la mujer que estaba feliz de poder recibir la asistencia de la Guardia Nacional.

“Desde el sábado después de María, todas las mañanas yo llegaba al Centro de Mando del Gobierno a buscar apoyo, para ver cómo podíamos transportar esta planta a Culebra. Y no recibía absolutamente ninguna contestación”, narró Rivera.

Tras varios intentos, no fue posible conseguir a Rodríguez Mercado.

Rivera, entretanto, destacó que el centro de salud no había podido dar servicios desde el azote de Culebra. El lugar, creado hace 14 años y que da servicio diariamente a aproximadamente 15 personas, es subvencionado con fondos federales. Además, ofrece servicios de dentista, pediatría, obstetricia y ginecología, médico de familia, internista, optómetra, trabajador social y nutricionista.

Rivera agradeció no solo al coronel Galoff sino también al coronel Ricardo Garratón, también de la Guardia Nacional, quien fue su primer contacto en la milicia para así llevar el generador a Culebra.

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Comprometida La Capacidad De Abasto Del País

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 8, 2017

Enormes cantidades de sedimentos se movieron hacia los embalses a consecuencia de las copiosas lluvias del huracán María, reduciendo potencialmente su capacidad de almacenamiento y amenazando, a su vez, con crear un problema de disponibilidad de agua en el país, advirtieron expertos.

La mayoría de los embalses ya están altamente sedimentados, y el panorama se complica aún más con el hecho de que María también causó una gran devastación forestal.

Sin vegetación en las montañas, se pierde la capacidad de amortiguamiento o retención de sedimentos, lo que facilita su entrada a los cuerpos de agua durante eventos de lluvia.

“En Puerto Rico, la capacidad de los embalses para recibir agua es cada vez menos, y ahora va a haber mucha más sedimentación entrado. Cuando a un embalse le queda el 20% de su capacidad, está anulado para todo efecto práctico”, sostuvo el exdirector de la Agencia Federal

de Protección Ambiental (EPA, por sus siglas en inglés) en Puerto Rico y el Caribe, Carl Soderberg.

Mencionó, por ejemplo, que los embalses Carraízo, en Trujillo Alto, y Dos Bocas, en Utuado, están sedimentados en 40% y 63%, respectivamente, y “es posible que ahora pierdan otro por ciento adicional”.

Cuestionado al respecto, el presidente ejecutivo de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AAA), Elí Díaz Atienza, indicó que, una vez se “normalice” el servicio de agua potable, la corporación pública iniciará un “análisis de la sedimentación” en los embalses causada por el huracán, que tocó suelo boricua el pasado 20 de septiembre.

“Reconocemos los retos de las represas. Estos sistemas traen muchos sedimentos y nos pueden haber afectado las reservas de agua. Tan pronto resolvamos el asunto de suplir agua a las comunidades, haremos la evaluación”, dijo.

Contó que, desde antes que María azotara la isla, la AAA está “trabajando” con el experto en manejo de reservas de agua y consultor internacional en hidrología, Greg Morris, para “buscar opciones para bajar un poco los sedimentos” en los embalses.

Preliminarmente, Díaz Atienza señaló que algunas de esas opciones incluyen dragados continuos (equipo permanente en los embalses), dragados dirigidos (embalses particulares) y mover los sedimentos hacia el mar a través de la apertura controlada de compuertas.

“Estaremos mirando los efectos de cada opción y calculando cuál es la mejor. Reclamaremos a través de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, por sus siglas en inglés) los costos necesarios para remover los sedimentos que se recibieron con el huracán y posterior a eso por no tener la forestación necesaria”, dijo el funcionario.

Más costoso

Aparte de sedimentos, los ríos y embalses están recibiendo ahora más hojas y ramas, lo que aumentará el costo de tratamiento del agua para que su consumo sea seguro, expuso el doctor en ecología y catedrático asociado de la Universidad de Carolina del Norte en Chapell Hill, Javier Arce Nazario.

Advirtió, incluso, que la descomposición de este material resultará en mayor cantidad de carbono disuelto en el agua que, cuando se mezcla con cloro, crea compuestos carcinógenos.

“Estos compuestos orgánicos y el sinnúmero de otros contaminantes que deben estar llegando a los ríos, resultará en un aumento en costo en el tratamiento del agua por parte de la AAA”, dijo Arce Nazario.

“La AAA va a recibir agua con un nivel de turbiedad bien alto y tendrá que lavar más a menudo sus filtros. Producir agua potable va a ser más duro y, por ende, más costoso”, agregó Soderberg.

Para este año fiscal, la AAA cuenta con un presupuesto de \$594 millones para costear su programa de operación y mantenimiento de sistemas de acueductos y alcantarillados.

Infraestructura vieja

El huracán María sacó a relucir la situación de vulnerabilidad de algunas de represas. Ejemplo de ello es lo que en principio se reportó como una rotura de 24 pulgadas en la represa Guajataca, y luego se dijo que se trataba de erosión en la parte del vertedor de concreto. El gobierno mantuvo bajo riesgo inminente de inundación a comunidades de Quebradillas, Isabela y San Sebastián, y cientos de familias fueron desalojadas.

“Típicamente, las represas se diseñan para una vida útil de 50 a 60 años. En Puerto Rico, muchas represas ya pasaron su vida útil, y lo que requieren ahora es una reevaluación y reacondicionamiento de sus estructuras”, afirmó el presidente del Colegio de Ingenieros y

Agrimensores de Puerto Rico, Pablo Vázquez Ruiz, quien recordó que la represa Guajataca se construyó entre 1919 y 1928.

Contó que, a excepción de las represas Cerrillos y Portugués, ambas en Ponce, las demás son “más vulnerables” a eventos como huracanes, porque no están diseñadas con la última tecnología.

“Las represas más modernas tienen mucha instrumentación que permite detectar cualquier indicio de falla. También cuentan con mecanismos de seguridad que no permiten que haya un desbordamiento. Pero en Puerto Rico, por el tiempo de construcción que tienen las represas, ya es necesario que haya una reevaluación y reacondicionamiento de todas estas estructuras. Necesitamos personal experto en el país que pueda realizar esto”, recalcó.

Sobre el aumento en sedimentación, Vázquez Ruiz dijo que es un problema que no supone un riesgo de seguridad para los embalses, pero hace que “vayan perdiendo su utilidad”.

Díaz Atienza, por su parte, descartó que la coyuntura actual se preste para impulsar la construcción de más represas. Aparte de que los “lugares idóneos” para nuevos embalses escasean en la isla, la AAA pretende “atacar la necesidad de más agua” con iniciativas para reducir las pérdidas en producción.

Al momento, la AAA pierde –física y comercialmente– el 60% del agua que produce.

Efecto en corales

Soderberg, entretanto, dijo que el flujo de sedimentos y la devastación forestal también tendrán “efecto directo” sobre los arrecifes de coral.

“Cuando les llegue esa sedimentación (a través de los ríos), los va a liquidar. Los sedimentos son veneno para los corales”, aseveró.

Datos del Centro para la Ecología Tropical Aplicada y Conservación (CATEC) de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras, apuntan a que el 80% de los arrecifes de coral, a menos de 100 pies de profundidad, ya muestran señales de mortandad asociada al evento de blanqueamiento de 2005. Ese evento se relaciona, a su vez, al aumento en la temperatura del mar debido al cambio climático.

Arce Nazario añadió que, después de un huracán, los estuarios se tornan menos salados y la turbidez aumenta, lo que afecta a las especies que allí habitan.

No se descarta, por lo tanto, una merma en la actividad pesquera.

Más inundaciones

Mientras, la directora del CATEC, Elvira Cuevas, expuso que, a corto plazo, otro efecto de la devastación forestal causada por María serán más inundaciones.

“Las inundaciones serían mayores al no tener la cobertura vegetal necesaria para reducir la escorrentía”, dijo.

Con ella coincidió el ambientalista y urbanista Ramón Cruz, miembro de la Junta de Directores del Sierra Club en Estados Unidos, quien señaló que la pérdida de áreas de mangle también aumenta el riesgo de inundaciones.

Arce Nazario fue más comedido, al indicar que la incidencia de inundaciones dependerá de la condición del terreno antes y después del huracán.

“El huracán no destruye toda la vegetación y no crea una superficie impermeable. Nosotros, los humanos, talamos un bosque y hacemos estacionamientos por donde el agua no penetra. Dentro de los bosques destruidos por el huracán hay mucha vida que podrá tener funciones importantes como, por ejemplo, retener la lluvia y crear fricción para que el agua no llegue rápidamente al río”, expresó.

El análisis preliminar del impacto de María en las áreas custodiadas por el Departamento de Recursos Naturales y Ambientales (DRNA) arrojó que el 98% de los árboles adultos está “en el piso”, indicó en días recientes la secretaria Tania Vázquez. El 80% de los árboles juveniles sobrevivió el azote del huracán, lo que ayudaría a adelantar la reforestación de las áreas naturales.

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En Precario La Salud Mental Tras El Paso Del Ciclón Por La Isla

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 10, 2017

JAYUYA. – Nilda Méndez Mercado se cuestiona a diario por qué sigue viva. Llegó hace poco más de un mes a Puerto Rico, desde el estado de Nueva Jersey, para estar “tranquila”. Pero el huracán María le cambió los planes.

El ciclón destruyó su casa en el sector Alturas Pisá del barrio Collores, en este municipio. Ni una pared quedó intacta. La vivienda se había construido con los ahorros “de toda una vida”.

Méndez Mercado quería regresar con su esposo, Francisco Soto Zamora, a quien dejó en las montañas jayuyanas mientras atendía su salud en Estados Unidos. Es paciente de cáncer, diabética y le dio un derrame cerebral que paralizó la mitad de su cuerpo.

“Pero ahora tengo depresión. Estoy mala de los nervios. Pasé el huracán aquí y fue terrible. Se llevó todo lo que me quedaba. Todo era nuevo y se lo llevó”, dijo llorosa la mujer de 70 años.

Desde el pasado 20 de septiembre, cuando María tocó suelo boricua, Méndez Mercado está “refugiada en un cuarto” en la casa de su suegra, de cemento. Sus problemas de movilidad le impiden salir a buscar ayuda. Tampoco ha llegado nadie a ofrecérsela.

“No he recibido ninguna ayuda, ni agua siquiera. Pasan y siguen. No nos han dado nada. No existimos en este lado. Todo se queda en el pueblo. Vienen los helicópteros con comida y agua, pero como yo no puedo ir... Necesito pañales, medicamentos y, cuanto antes, una vivienda, porque yo no puedo vivir así”, esbozó.

Méndez Mercado contó que pasa los días “llorando y llorando”, y que varias noches –en las últimas semanas– “me he acostado a dormir con hambre porque no nos han dado nada”.

Señaló que, debido a las irregularidades en el servicio postal, sus hijos no han podido enviarle ayuda desde los estados de Nueva Jersey, Illinois y Florida. “La correspondencia no llega”, dijo.

Dijo que, “tan pronto tenga unos dólares” y se normalice el tráfico aéreo, regresará a Estados Unidos.

“Nos viró la vida”

Wanda Sepúlveda Torres y Belinda Maldonado Medina, de 53 y 27 años, respectivamente, son vecinas de Méndez Mercado y también se expresaron deprimidas.

Denunciaron, además, que ninguna agencia municipal, estatal o federal ha visitado el sector Alturas Pisá para ofrecer servicios de salud mental.

“Porque los necesitamos. Este huracán nos viró la vida a todo el mundo”, dijo Sepúlveda Torres, quien perdió el techo de su casa y decenas de pertenencias, y ahora duerme en una caseta de campaña en el patio.

Lo menos que reclaman es un toldo de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, en inglés), “para que la lluvia no siga mojando lo poco que nos quedó”.

500 familias

El administrador municipal de Jayuya, Alexis Bennett, indicó que 500 familias perdieron sus casas parcial o totalmente debido al paso de María, incluyendo algunas de cemento.

El huracán, asimismo, cobró la vida de un hombre cuando un alud derrumbó su vivienda, en el sector Caricaboa.

“No tenemos agua embotellada, pero la que está saliendo por el grifo es potable y lo podemos garantizar. También necesitamos combustible, tanto para nuestra flota como para alguna infraestructura del gobierno estatal”, dijo Bennett, tras precisar que el 33% del municipio tiene el servicio de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AAA).

A casi tres semanas del paso de María, las brigadas siguen “abriendo camino”. Las carreteras, de hecho, aún exhiben grandes cantidades de lodo y algunos tramos están inundados por las lluvias que continúan. En el sector Hoyos Planes, unas 25 familias solo tienen acceso a pie, porque la carretera PR-531 colapsó.

Bennett reconoció que la falta de combustible ha limitado la repartición de agua y comida en los barrios jayuyanos.

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Efluvios De La Donahue

By Mayra Montero

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 8, 2017

La noticia de que el gobernador no tiene “un Plan B” para atender el desastre causado por el huracán, siendo su única alternativa los fondos que le otorgue el Congreso y la administración del presidente Trump, no puede sorprender a nadie. Es más, ni siquiera es noticia.

¿Quién tiene un Plan B de cara a este desastre? A ver, ¿de dónde va a sacarse nada para comenzar siquiera a darle forma a esto?

La presencia del Ejército de los Estados Unidos va para largo, y oí decir que empezaban a ocuparse ellos mismos de la entrega de alimentos y otros artículos de primera necesidad, en vista de que habían surgido indicios de que en la ruta entre el centro de acopio y los municipios, se “esfumaban” paquetes de medicinas y otros productos.

También oí que había quejas de los militares, porque en algunos residenciales y otros sectores del interior de la Isla, los llamados “bichotes” obstaculizaban su trabajo.

Bienvenidos al club.

Eso lo sufren aquí, a diario, cientos de instituciones cívicas o religiosas, que deben pasarle la manita al capo y contar con su autorización para poder asomar la cara en las comunidades que viven bajo un cacicazgo de origen criminal, y en las que el trapicheo es cosa seria. Los del ejército, sin embargo, creo que no son propensos a pasarle la manita a nadie. El día que tengan que entrar en un residencial, un barrio remoto o lo que sea, y tengan órdenes concretas de no andarse con contemplaciones, se abrirán paso por donde tengan que abrirlo. Aunque no hayan venido en son de guerra, ese tipo de movilización es un inconveniente para el bajo mundo, algo que, unido a los problemas tácticos que dejó el huracán, arruina en parte lo que es la válvula de escape de mucha gente que depende de la economía informal. Puede haber “roces”, claro que sí.

Es sabido que los huracanes entorpecen el movimiento clandestino de los cargamentos. La mar está picada, los vuelos son escasos y las carreteras quedan intransitables. Si a eso se le añade una fuerza militar que llega a controlar las vías públicas y con la que es difícil establecer “alianzas” para que se hagan de la vista larga o custodien el trasiego, la situación puede tomarse tensa. Debe tenerse en cuenta, sin embargo, que el día en que le inflijan un rasguño a uno de esos

militares, arderá Troya. Los que van a entrar a buscar a los culpables no serán agentes locales ni simples investigadores, sino oficiales del ejército, con sus métodos un poco más enérgicos.

El problema sigue siendo la falta de electricidad.

Cada vez que uno lee que han tenido que mandar a buscar especialistas mexicanos en tendido eléctrico, a los que FEMA pagará su sueldo, es imposible no acordarse de los millones que se dilapidaron en Lisa Donahue y su compañía. A la par que la gran estafa que resultó el trazado y construcción de la llamada Vía Verde, está este otro fiasco de la contratación de la reina madre —se movía como una reina madre—, afectada y ladina, que cargó con cientos de millones, ella y sus compinches. Una mujer que nada adelantaba, que pedía prórrogas y más prórrogas a su contrato vergonzoso, y que no hizo otra cosa en Puerto Rico que no fuera lucrarse y marearnos con la “colonizadora” de que ella podía resolverlo todo.

Aquí tenemos las consecuencias. La Donahue en capilla ardiente, sin que le falte ni una bombillita, y nosotros ahogados en la incertidumbre, con cientos de negocios cerrados, miles de empleados en la calle, sin trabajo y sin sueldo.

Ésa es otra. Hay una diferencia entre la gente que está en su casa, cobrando salarios del gobierno, y los que han recibido un portazo en las narices, porque los comercios y las pequeñas empresas ignoran cuándo podrán reanudar operaciones. Los verdaderos sacrificados son esos, los que están ahora mismo esperando que llegue la luz, alimentando la esperanza de que el patrono no cierre para siempre.

Por eso choca tanto que, cobrando su salario entero, algunos se dediquen a “filosofar” sobre el Plan B y el Plan C, y hasta el Plan Z que debería tener el gobernador.

Desengañense, no hay más ninguno: esperar un rescate económico y echar hacia adelante con lo que nos caiga, con espíritu de sacrificio y austeridad. Sí, austeridad, esa palabra que tanto mortifica a los patriotas de balcón.

En cuanto a la visita del vicepresidente Pence, que se puso en plan Miss Simpatía y aseguró que el coquí iba a “cantar más alto”, confieso que prefiero los gruñidos del otro. Los papeloallazos del otro. La descarnada brutalidad del otro. Lo prefiero incluso antes que la vocecita de la Donahue. ¿Recuerdan su voz? Dios sabe que nunca la creí.

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OPINIÓN: “Lo Que Vi En Puerto Rico”

[El Tiempo Latino](#), October 10, 2017

Ponce, PUERTO RICO – Esta semana pude ser testigo de la peor devastación que he presenciado en mi vida. He ido muchas veces a la Isla del Encanto, tengo familia allá. Sin embargo este viaje no fue como ningún otro.

Pasé la mayor parte del tiempo en Ponce, en la parte sur de la isla. Ponce es la segunda ciudad más poblada de Puerto Rico. Allí estuve junto al gobernador Ricardo Roselló, la alcaldesa María Meléndez y una delegación de demócratas de la Florida entregando insumos a quienes más lo necesitaban luego de sobrevivir la destrucción del huracán María. Vimos un colchón de tamaño matrimonial enredado en un poste de cableado telefónico. Las líneas de comunicación están tan afectadas que ni siquiera pudimos utilizar un teléfono satelital para comunicarnos con el mundo exterior.

La isla que conozco ya no existe, ha sido destruida por uno de los huracanes más feroces en la historia de Estados Unidos. Lo que no fue destruido y aún sigue intacto es la identidad

estadounidense de Puerto Rico. De hecho, tan sólo a pasos de casas destruidas por la tormenta, aún estaba en pie una bandera estadounidense con sus estrellas y rayas ondeando en el viento.

Los 3.5 millones de personas en Puerto Rico son ciudadanos estadounidenses. Ellos merecen un trato justo e igualitario como cualquier otro ciudadano estadounidense. Desafortunadamente, tenemos un presidente que ha mostrado una perturbadora indiferencia por el bienestar de estos conciudadanos. El presidente Trump esperó más de una semana luego del huracán para levantar las restricciones del Jones Act, a pesar de haberlas levantado para Florida y Texas incluso antes de que el huracán Irma tocara tierra. No hay excusa para el retraso de Trump, que sólo ha causado más sufrimiento al impedir que las naves puedan entregar insumos de manera más rápida. Es más, la agencia FEMA aún no ha autorizado todas las herramientas de asistencia que tienen a su disposición.

Mientras millones esperaban recibir ayuda el fin de semana pasado, Trump decidió iniciar una pelea a través de Twitter con la alcaldesa de San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz, quien en ese momento iba puerta por puerta buscando salvar vidas mientras Trump estaba en su campo de golf y le dedicaba sólo una hora a Puerto Rico. Representantes de su administración llamaron la devastación en la isla como una “historia de buenas noticias”.

Incluso cuando el presidente Trump visitó Puerto Rico el martes, dejó en claro que él considera que el esfuerzo de rescate de nuestro gobierno era una inconveniencia en vez de una responsabilidad nacional. “Ustedes descontrolaron nuestro presupuesto” le dijo al pueblo de Puerto Rico, un sentimiento que estuvo curiosamente ausente de sus respuestas a desastres en Texas y Florida.

Responder a un desastre natural es un problema complejo. Sin embargo, el problema aquí no es con las personas en el terreno o con los trabajadores de carrera que dedican sus vidas a situaciones como esta. El problema es con la persona a la cabeza de las decisiones.

Los puertos de Puerto Rico están abiertos. Los aeropuertos están abiertos. Con todo y esto, el general de tres estrellas nombrado por el Pentágono para liderar los esfuerzos de alivio dijo la semana pasada que no está ni cerca de tener la cantidad de tropas o equipos que necesita.

Trump encabeza el poder ejecutivo. ¿Por qué no actúa como tal? ¿Por qué no está canalizando la inmensa cantidad de recursos a su disposición para traer la ayuda que la gente necesita desesperadamente? ¿Y, por qué es que sigue felicitándose a sí mismo por un trabajo que está lejos de terminarse?

La situación en Puerto Rico no es una “historia de buenas noticias”. Es una emergencia y necesitamos manos a la obra. Las muertes han incrementado en un doble desde la visita de Trump. La gente necesita agua, comida, insumos básicos. Ellos necesitan que FEMA tenga una presencia en lugares como Ponce, donde más de un millón de personas están desesperadas por ayuda federal. Ellos necesitan la fuerza completa y todos los recursos del gobierno de los Estados Unidos.

Proveer al pueblo de Puerto Rico con la asistencia que necesitan no debería ser un tema partidista. No se puede fijar un precio para la vida, ya sea en Florida, Texas o Puerto Rico. No sólo resulta inhumano tratar a nuestros hermanos puertorriqueños como ciudadanos de segunda clase, es también algo profundamente anti-estadounidense.

No hay nada como ser testigo de primera mano, caminar por esas comunidades devastadas y hablar con las personas que lo han pedido todo, menos lo que llevan puesto y la esperanza de sus corazones. Ellos no se dan por vencidos, ellos saldrán adelante, pero no pueden hacerlo solos. Necesitamos estar allí para nuestros hermanos boricuas.

Es el momento de que el presidente Trump deje de actuar como que esto es una “misión cumplida”. Nuestra tarea apenas comienza.

Esta pieza fue publicada inicialmente en inglés en el U.S. News & World Report.

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Supervisión Para Que La Ayuda Llegue Rápido A Los Necesitados

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 9, 2017

Aguadilla – No faltaban brazos para pasar de mano en mano las cajas con agua y las que contenían comida.

De esa forma, los militares -de la Guardia Nacional, de la Reserva del Ejército de los Estados Unidos y los State Guard (voluntarios activados por el gobernador)- hacían llegar a las manos de cientos de puertorriqueños afectados por el huracán María los suministros proporcionados por la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, por sus siglas en inglés).

Alrededor de 500 familias de los residenciales Stanford y Agustín Stahl, en Aguadilla, hicieron una larga cola tan pronto vieron los tres camiones militares con su distintivo color crema. En menos de una hora, tiempo en que todos recibieron ayuda, no dudaron en tomarse fotos con los militares y decirles en inglés y español, gracias.

“Esto me ayuda con el nene y eso”, dijo Marilyn Valentín tras recibir una caja con tres galones de agua y otra con comida lista para consumo. Con la ayuda de los militares cargó los suministros en el coche donde llevaba a su niño de cuatro años.

Lo mismo hizo Raicha Guerra, quien llevaba a su hijo 2 años.

“Los que han venido son el Army y la Cruz Roja”, comentó la joven de 22 años cuando este diario le preguntó por la ayuda recibida.

A pasos de ella estaba el alcalde de Aguadilla, Carlos Méndez, quien previamente se había reunido en las instalaciones de la Guardia Nacional en Aguadilla con el teniente general Jeffrey S. Buchanan, encargado de las operaciones militares en Puerto Rico.

Buchanan, al igual que el comandante dual de tropas (Dual Status Commander), el general José Reyes, viajó desde San Juan hasta el pueblo costero de Aguadilla para ver de cerca la nueva logística implementada por el general de tres estrellas. En vez de que los alcaldes de los 78 municipios lleguen a los centros de distribución de alimento y agua, serán los militares los que lleguen a cada municipio.

Esa fue la logística que anunció la semana pasada el propio Buchanan para asegurarse de que la ayuda llegue a la gente afectada por el huracán María, luego de quejas por la tardanza en la entrega o por la poca cantidad que reciben.

Para ello, se crearon cuatro áreas de apoyo logístico (logistic support area) que deben llevar los suministros a 68 pueblos. Estas áreas consisten de casetas repletas de militares ubicadas en la antigua base Roosevelt Roads, en Ceiba; el Fuerte Buchanan, en Guaynabo; en la base Ramey, en Aguadilla; y en el Campamento Santiago, en Salinas. En cada una debe haber entre 2,000 a 3,000 militares.

“Esto nos ayuda a descentralizar”, explicó Buchanan, quien no dudó en descargar camiones y entregar suministros.

Cada una de estas áreas tiene un apoyo de ingeniería, otro de seguridad y uno de personal médico. Así que, en conjunto, cada área no solo se destina para la distribución de agua y alimentos sino que también brinda seguridad, limpia vías de acceso y provee servicios médicos donde sea necesario, dijo Reyes.

Estas cuatro áreas se unen a 10 municipios, para así cubrir los 78 municipios, que recibirán suministros de los militares y que también sus respectivos alcaldes pueden buscar la ayuda.

Se trata de municipios grandes que pueden hacer este tipo de tarea o que sufrieron gran devastación tras la embestida del huracán, dijo Reyes en referencia a Carolina, San Juan, Bayamón, Guaynabo, Arecibo, Ponce, Mayagüez, Humacao, Utuado y Guayama.

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Urge La Necesidad De Contar Con Más Camiones Cisterna En Morovis

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 8, 2017

MOROVIS – La alcaldesa de Morovis, Carmen Maldonado, indicó que el municipio continúa esfuerzos diarios para llevar agua y alimentos a las comunidades afectadas, al tiempo que reconoció que si no fuera por organizaciones privadas y la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA), los suministros, especialmente el agua, no llegarían a donde se necesitan.

“El reto mayor, y lo que estoy enfrentando ahora mismo, son los camiones cisterna. Morovis no tiene agua. Tenemos muchísimas personas encamadas y en este municipio solo cuento con un camión cisterna. Le hice la petición a FEMA de que me enviaran cuatro camiones cisterna adicionales porque Acueductos solamente me envió uno de 2,000 galones”, dijo Maldonado.

La alcaldesa adelantó que coordinará un viaje a los Estados Unidos para gestionar dos camiones cisterna adicionales.

“Hay mucha necesidad de agua y alimentos, y para mí eso es primordial, antes que cualquier cosa material”, enfatizó la ejecutiva municipal.

Por su parte, el Comisionado de Seguridad del municipio, Francisco Rosado Correa, explicó que el ayuntamiento está en la etapa de recuperación y remoción de escombros. Del mismo modo, añadió que esperan identificar varias escuelas que puedan servir como centros de distribución.

“Estamos llevándole alimento y agua a la comunidad como prioridad. Una vez logremos estabilizar el problema del alimento y el agua, vamos a establecer unos centros de distribución, posiblemente vamos a utilizar escuelas en los distintos barrios para poder llevar la comida y el agua. Por ahora lo estaremos llevando directamente a las casas”, sostuvo Rosado Correa.

A más de 20 días del paso del temporal por Puerto Rico, las comunidades Vaga, Pasto y San Lorenzo permanecen incomunicadas debido al colapso del puente que daba paso a Morovis. El único acceso, actualmente, es a través del municipio vecino de Orocovis.

“Lo que nos tomaba 15 minutos, ahora nos está tomando casi hora y cuarto. A esos barrios estamos llevando doctores, transportación a pacientes que tienen algún tipo de condición como diálisis o personas que reciben algún tipo de tratamiento”, dijo Rosado.

La petición del ayuntamiento es que el gobierno central coordine la instalación de un puente provisional para restablecer el acceso a dichas comunidades.

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Más De La Mitad Del País Tiene Agua

By Yaritza Rivera Clemente

[El Vocero de Puerto Rico](#), October 7, 2017

El gobernador Ricardo Rosselló informó que 695 mil clientes cuentan con el servicio de agua, lo que equivale al 55.5% de los abonados, mientras que solo un 10.7% de la población está conectado al sistema de energía eléctrica.

Según la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AAA), el servicio por zonas se encuentra en 64% para el área metro, 69% para el oeste, 69% para el sur y 63% para el este. El norte cuenta con un 28% de servicio.

También se informó que los generadores eléctricos en la represa de Carraízo están en funcionamiento lo que permitió restablecer el servicio en la urbanización Fairview y el barrio Saint Just de Trujillo Alto, para añadir 12 mil nuevos clientes.

“Reconocemos que muchos clientes no están recibiendo los servicios de agua y luz por lo que he ordenado a las dos corporaciones públicas a detener el envío de facturas. A las personas que se les haya enviado facturas por periodos en los que no tuvo el servicio, no tendrán que pagarlo y no se le discontinuará el servicio. Una vez tengamos los servicios de medición operacionales solo se le cobrará la tarifa de consumo a los clientes que hayan recibido servicios”, dijo Rosselló.

Respecto a la situación en la represa Guajataca, Rosselló indicó que aún se encuentra en “estado crítico”, y mencionó que el Cuerpo de Ingenieros y el Departamento de Defensa de Estados Unidos laboran para establecer en el lugar barreras de concreto para mitigar cualquier emergencia. Recalcó que esa iniciativa busca prevenir el impacto que pudieran tener las lluvias que se esperan en la zona noroeste en los próximos días.

Por su parte, el director ejecutivo de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE), Ricardo Ramos, informó que se está trabajando para energizar la represa de La Plata. Señaló que los trabajos se interrumpieron el jueves por causa de los rayos que acompañaron la intensa lluvia que cayó en la tarde. Espera que la represa pueda entrar en funciones este fin de semana.

Aumentan las muertes

De otro lado, el primer ejecutivo confirmó que con dos muertes reportadas en los municipios de Patillas y San Germán aumentó a 36 el número de víctimas fatales relacionado al huracán.

En el caso de Patillas, se informó que se trata de una persona que fue encontrada entre escombros, y en San Germán, otra que presuntamente fue golpeada por un árbol.

Rosselló dijo que espera tener un cuadro más claro sobre las muertes vinculadas al potente ciclón y mencionó que el director del Departamento de Seguridad Pública, Héctor Pesquera, está a cargo de recabar la información a las agencias pertinentes.

Además, se comunicó que la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (Fema, por sus siglas en inglés) entregó ayer 160,259 litros de agua y 262,800 comidas de los Centros de Distribución.

De igual forma, se dijo que se le suplió combustible a once instalaciones médicas. Se esperaba que ayer se entregaran más camiones de combustible a otros municipios y se espera llegar con igual ayuda a Vieques y a Culebra.

De otro lado, la Junta Reglamentadora de Telecomunicaciones notificó que 42% de los clientes cuentan con servicio celular. Debido a un corte de fibra en Ponce, se afectaron 70,000 abonados.

Hay 14 Cell on Wings (COW) de AT&T instalados; cada uno tiene cobertura de servicios de un radio de 3 millas y permite hacer llamadas y enviar mensajes de texto desde los celulares. El COW de Arecibo tiene una cobertura de servicio de 4 millas.

Pagan horas extras a Policía

La Policía de Puerto Rico recibió por medio de FEMA \$950,000 para el pago de horas extras trabajadas durante el huracán Irma y ya se hizo la solicitud de las primeras dos semanas de María.

Además, se restableció el servicio de la red de radio central para Arecibo, Mayagüez y Aguadilla, además del servicio con el que ya cuenta San Juan, Bayamón, Carolina y Caguas. Las demás regiones tienen comunicaciones a nivel regional.

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Bajo Lupa La Distribución De Agua Y Alimentos

By Laura M. Quintero

[El Vocero de Puerto Rico](#), October 9, 2017

El gobernador Ricardo Rosselló informó ayer que ante las continuas querellas de que el agua y la comida no llegan a los sectores en necesidad, ha solicitado a la Fiscalía federal y al Departamento de Justicia realizar una investigación que permita identificar cuáles son los problemas de distribución.

“Hemos decidido tomar una serie de acciones para evitar el mal manejo de la comida... He ordenado a la Guardia Nacional que vaya a los municipios y esté observando y participando en la distribución de los alimentos que están llevando”, comentó en relación a las ayudas de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA), la Oficina de la Primera Dama y de otras entidades a los damnificados del huracán María.

La determinación del gobernador surge luego de denuncias de que empleados gubernamentales se estaban apropiando de los suministros, según la vicepresidenta de la Asociación de Productos de Puerto Rico, Marilú Otero. Reclamos similares hizo el pastor Jorge Raschke, quien se topó con que habían robado en los muelles parte de la ayuda traída por Pentecostales Unidos por Puerto Rico.

Rosselló pidió que se investiguen las querellas “para ver si en efecto es una cuestión de mal manejo y si en efecto se ha hecho algo de manera equivocada, consideren todo el procesamiento de la ley”.

Algunos municipios como Cayey se movieron a crear estructuras de base comunitaria para identificar a encamados, niños o personas con necesidades de salud a ser atendidos con prioridad, de modo que la propia comunidad se apodere de la recuperación. El alcalde cayeyano, Rolando Ortiz, informó que se distribuirá el agua y los alimentos de acuerdo con ese censo comunitario y se organizarán también comedores comunitarios.

“Le planteé al gobernador que para nosotros enfrentar una crisis, necesitamos una estructura local con autoridad”, contó el también presidente de la Asociación de Alcaldes a EL VOCERO.

En la calle los auditores

Por otro lado, los agentes de auditoría fiscal del Departamento de Hacienda y auditores de la Oficina del Contralor estarán contabilizando y monitoreando “todo lo que se está entregando” en los municipios. El secretario de Hacienda, Raúl Maldonado, comentó a este diario que entre ambas entidades hay 500 agentes disponibles para esta tarea.

Abordado sobre por qué demoró tanto el gobierno en establecer este sistema, Maldonado mencionó que la distribución estaba en manos de los municipios. “Los alcaldes tenían un sistema interno de finanzas, lo que pasa es que con la destrucción que hubo se les hizo bien difícil y queremos darles un apoyo adicional”, contestó.

El gobernador reconoció, además, que se han recibido querellas de comercios que han estado cobrando el Impuesto sobre Ventas y Uso (IVU) y gasolineras que han desobedecido la orden de congelación del margen de ganancias del Departamento de Asuntos del Consumidor (DACO).

El secretario del DACO, Michael Pierluisi, confirmó a la prensa que recibirá empleados de otras agencias que se capacitarán para salir a la calle a inspeccionar el cumplimiento con las órdenes administrativas de congelación de precios. Las multas oscilarán entre \$5,000 a \$10,000 por cada transacción ilegal.

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A Quince Días De María

[El Vocero de Puerto Rico](#), October 6, 2017

Sin lugar a dudas el huracán María ha dejado una huella dolorosa en Puerto Rico. Su furia nos golpeó de una manera tan violenta que nos deja en ascuas de cara a nuestro futuro.

Definitivamente, ni nosotros, ni nadie, podía estar 100% preparado para un desastre de esta magnitud.

Las acciones del gobierno previas al paso del huracán fueron puntuales para evitar mayor cantidad de muertes.

Las autoridades locales movieron sus limitados recursos bastante rápido luego del paso del fenómeno atmosférico y lograron abrir accesos en una buena parte de la Isla.

Pero la respuesta de la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA) y de otras instituciones federales desafortunadamente no fue, ni es, tan rápida como se necesitaba.

Entendemos que ser una isla complica mucho el panorama, pero no justifica la dilación en las entregas de suministros, como agua y alimentos, y tampoco en la entrega de los famosos toldos azules para proteger las casas que perdieron sus techos.

No nos malinterpreten; agradecemos la ayuda de FEMA y otras agencias federales, pero debe acelerarse el proceso, sobre todo en la montaña.

Aunque vivimos una era digital, en que las comunicaciones son más rápidas y el Internet se convierte en un aliado para apoyar las soluciones, no nos sirve de nada cuando no hay energía eléctrica, y parte del proceso burocrático para coordinar las ayudas ha descansado en la herramienta digital, probablemente convirtiendo el proceso en uno más lento.

Ya han pasado dos semanas y al día de ayer teníamos muchos signos positivos.

El Aeropuerto Internacional Luis Muñoz Marín está abierto en un 100%, lo que facilitará el movimiento de pasajeros varados aquí, la llegada de más personal de apoyo y el reencuentro de familias.

Las estaciones de gasolina continúan operando con bastante normalidad y, al día de ayer, casi 900 de estos establecimientos estaban abiertos.

Hay 64 hospitales en funciones y ya 25 de ellos están operando con energía suplida por la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE).

En cuanto a los bancos, las sucursales abiertas superaban las 175 y los cajeros automáticos o ATM están operando en un 79%.

El agua del sistema de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AAA) continúa fluyendo a buen ritmo desde hace días, alcanzando ya el 55% de la Isla.

Las señales celulares también reportan una mejoría significativa, alcanzando ya en la Isla un 45% de los clientes.

Desafortunadamente, la energía eléctrica todavía sigue siendo el talón de Aquiles del proceso de recuperación, pero debemos recordar que el sistema ya se encontraba frágil antes de María. Casi un 10% de los clientes de la AEE está recibiendo electricidad.

Todo esto lo vemos como señales positivas que deben empezar a generar más esperanza en la ruta hacia la nueva normalidad.

El presidente Donald Trump estuvo en visita oficial de cuatro horas en Puerto Rico y pudo comprobar que realmente somos una zona de desastre. Mientras él cumplía con sus compromisos, su equipo se reunió con el gobernador y tuvieron la oportunidad de discutir en profundidad la crisis energética.

La visita programada durante el día de hoy del vicepresidente de Estados Unidos, Mike Pence, puede ser quizás un indicio de que, aparte de los \$29,000 millones solicitados para los afectados por los huracanes Irma, María y Harvey en distintas jurisdicciones, puedan recibirse otras ayudas y más apoyo del gobierno federal.

Y realmente necesitamos que sea revisada la situación de Puerto Rico porque, de acuerdo con los estimados preliminares, entre los daños directos y el impacto en la actividad económica, de una forma u otra las pérdidas ascienden a más de \$95,000 millones.

La mejoría es lenta, pero constante, y por ello debemos mirar el futuro con esperanza.

Lo que sí tiene que cambiar radicalmente es el apoyo a las comunidades más impactadas, sobre todo las de la zona montañosa.

Hacemos un llamado a los directivos de FEMA para que agilicen la entrega de agua, provisiones y toldos a esta parte de la población.

A quince días del impacto de María podríamos estar mejor, sin lugar a dudas, si los recursos se asignan y manejan con mayor prontitud.

También ayudaría mucho a que estemos mejor si todos, como ciudadanos, ejercemos la paciencia y elevamos la vara de la tolerancia en medio de una de las crisis económicas y sociales más difíciles de nuestra historia.

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OPINION

Christie Was Right Not To Allow Building On Flood-Prone Areas. Why The Change? | Opinion

By John A. Miller and Samantha Medlock

[Star-Ledger](#), October 9, 2017

For over a month, many of us have been riveted to the Weather Channel and news outlets, watching the heroic rescue efforts in Texas during Hurricane Harvey, as well as the massive evacuation of Florida and devastating impacts of Hurricane Irma on that state and the Leeward Islands, plus the outright devastation of Puerto Rico and other Caribbean Islands by Hurricane Maria.

It's been a stark reminder that New Jersey has its own vulnerabilities, with hundreds of thousands of residents living in areas that are prone to flooding and at risk from severe storms and sea level rise.

But instead of working to make us safer, the Christie administration is rushing to adopt rule changes that will put more of the state's people and businesses and infrastructure in harm's way.

In 2013, Gov. Chris Christie wisely vetoed legislation that would allow new residential and commercial development to occur in our state's coastal high hazard areas on piers or platforms over oceans or rivers.

Developers were pressuring to build in Atlantic City and along the Hudson River Waterfront, and the governor rightly prevented such high risk development from occurring in these flood-prone areas. Not only would such risky new development endanger the people and property perched over waterways, but it would put first responders in harm's way. And even if developers factor in the cost of private flood insurance under today's prices -- and find buyers who are willing and able to pay them -- those insurance costs will likely increase over time.

Now in its final months, the administration seems to have flip-flopped, and the Department of Environmental Protection has proposed altering the rules to allow developers to build in the places that are most exposed to the threats of the new powerful storms that our future certainly holds.

The proposed rule amendments fail to make mention of climate change or sea level rise, an omission that should be considered a slap in the face to the New Jerseyans already dealing with chronic flooding during high tides. New Jersey's coast is likely to experience up to two feet of sea level rise by 2050. And towns along the shore are already experiencing nuisance (really chronic) flooding - climate change effects are already here.

Risking Human Lives

Perhaps of most concern is that residential and retail buildings built out over the water will put first responders' lives at risk. We have seen in recent days the valor and courage of those in Texas, Florida, and the Caribbean who have worked so hard to secure others' safety, including many who defied evacuation orders. New Jersey's coastal high hazard area is the area of greatest risk and defined by three foot and greater waves during a storm event - conditions that are sure to make rescue efforts difficult and potentially deadly. There is no way to know where the pier or platform ends when it is under several feet of turbulent water. And as many who called for rescue in the recent storms learned the hard way, emergency services may not be available during the worst of the storm.

This means that the occupants of new homes built on piers could have to ride out future storms on their own, likely without electricity, drinkable water, communications, or emergency assistance. When rescue becomes available after the storm has passed, it will still be risky to first responders and residents and extremely costly to public budgets. Further, we know all too well from Hurricanes Sandy and Harvey that floodwaters are often contaminated and contact can lead to sickness. We need to reduce disaster risks and costs, not needlessly and wastefully increase vulnerability in new construction.

Risking Property

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) operates as a quid pro quo, making federally-backed flood insurance available in communities that agree to manage development against the risk of flooding. From 1978 to August 2017, New Jersey had the third-highest payouts from the federal program, amounting to nearly \$6 billion, including claims from Hurricane Sandy. Development on waterway sites would jeopardize the ability of homeowners and business owners to insure their assets from future storm or flooding damage. Under federal law, the availability of flood insurance under the NFIP is contingent upon land use control measures coupled with consistent enforcement.

If a municipality were to approve this type of development, they would be in danger of being removed from the NFIP. Anyone in the town looking to purchase flood insurance, including businesses, residents, or the municipality itself, could find themselves unable to do access federally-backed flood insurance through the NFIP. As Governor Christie himself noted when he rejected the idea in 2013, allowing such risky development endangers policyholders' access to federally-backed flood insurance as well as the community's standing under the NFIP. New Jerseyans who do not live in floodplains will be affected, too: If a community is kicked out of the NFIP for failing to adequately manage floodplain development, then every family and business throughout the community becomes ineligible for certain forms of federal assistance in a presidentially declared disaster.

Risking Economic Prosperity

As a laboratory for innovation, New Jersey should be working to understand the nature of the risk it faces, and what kinds of steps are needed to assure it will remain a safe, vibrant and inclusive place and better prepared for the natural disaster risks it is likely to face in the future. The state should work to attract investment in sustainable and strong new projects that provide the housing, infrastructure, and workplaces of the future. These must be properly sited and designed to last their full expected life, using modern planning and building codes, taking into account sea-level rise, extreme precipitation, and storm-surge impacts. New Jersey's leaders need to learn what storms like Sandy, Harvey, and Irma have to teach, to position the state to compete for new commercial investment driven by access to an educated, vibrant, and resilient workforce.

The comment period for the proposed changes to the rules ended September 15. Both gubernatorial candidates should call for an extension of the comment period and seek additional input from voters on this risky scheme, especially in light of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and future storms that may hit on his or her watch.

John A. Miller, P.E., CFM, CSM, of Lambertville is a water resources engineer and a United States Senate fellow.

Samantha Medlock, CFM, of Alexandria, Virginia, is a former senior adviser for preparedness and resilience in the Obama White House.

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Subject:	Daily News Clips 10.10.17 DR 4335/4340 VI
Date:	2017/10/10 08:26:45
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Attached is the media monitoring report dated today, October 10, 2017, for DR 4335/4340 VI.

Media Monitoring Report

October 10, 2017

FEMA Region 2

This report is a compilation of news media stories pertinent to Region 2 and the Sandy recovery efforts in New York and New Jersey for FEMA employees and a small number of government officials working on FEMA's issues. To be added or removed from this distribution, please e-mail gina.callaghan@fema.dhs.gov

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HURRICANE MARIA PUERTO RICO

FEMA Officials Say They're 'Slowly Starting To Make Progress' In Puerto Rico

By Deborah Barfield Berry

[USA Today](#), October 9, 2017

WASHINGTON — Federal emergency officials said Monday the disaster in Puerto Rico has emerged as one of the “most logistically complex and challenging events” the U.S. has faced, but said they are continuing to make progress on key recovery goals such as shipping in hundreds of generators to try to restore power on the devastated island.

“We’re slowly starting to make progress every day,” Brock Long, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, told reporters Monday at the agency’s headquarters in Washington. “It’s not going to move as fast as people want because you’re dealing with a very fragile power system, very fragile public works system, very fragile roadway network system.”

Long defended the agency’s response in Puerto Rico saying it has faced “unique challenges” getting supplies and resources to the island, which was hard hit by Hurricane Maria Sept. 20. FEMA and the administration have come under intense fire for what critics have called their slow response.

“They are still struggling to ramp up,” said Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, the top Democrat on the House Homeland Security Committee. “We’ve gone this far and we still have areas challenged with getting ... water and food.”

Thompson was part of a bipartisan congressional delegation that spent Saturday in Puerto Rico assessing the damage. The trip included a helicopter tour, a briefing with federal and local officials and a lunch with Gov. Ricardo Rossello.

Long, who visited the island last Tuesday, said officials faced a host of challenges getting supplies to the island, particularly when the ports and airports were closed. He said in some cases, ships were circling south of Puerto Rico laden with supplies but unable to land.

Federal agencies had to build a make-shift air traffic control system to get the airport open and get supplies in, he said.

“Maria was such a catastrophic hit that all ports of entry – water ports and airports – were damaged,” said Long, former head of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.

More than 16,000 federal and Department of Transportation workers are in Puerto Rico and another 3,000 in the Virgin Islands to help, Long said. FEMA announced Monday that it is looking to hire more hurricane recovery workers, focusing on temporary employees in disaster areas and on-call emergency response staff.

“The problem with Puerto Rico is diminished capacity,” said Long, adding that many local and state workers were also victims of the storm. “We had to play a greater first-responder role than we typically would on the continental United States, which as I said, we’re not really designed to do that in many cases.”

Long said the agency worked with local officials to figure out ways to get the airports and ports open.

“It takes time to do that,” he said. “We can’t just flip a switch and make the systems work.”

Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, chief of engineers and commander general of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, said power is one of the most critical issues in Puerto Rico.

Federal officials said they are working to restore power, focusing on getting generators in place particularly at hospitals. “It’s going to take a long time to get electricity to everybody in Puerto Rico,” Semonite said.

Semonite said there are 200 generators on the island ready to be installed and another 400 coming. In addition, he said, a leased power plant is on a barge and on its way to the island.

It will probably take about a month and a half before it’s up and running, he said.

Still, some groups and charities complained Monday they can’t get much-needed supplies to the island.

President Trump has feuded with the mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulin Cruz who has also complained about the administration’s response. Trump blasted some of the criticism, saying it was fueled by “politically motivated ingrates.”

Long said he took some heat after saying on a TV program Sunday that he “filtered out” the mayor.

“We do have to filter out a lot of the noise that’s out there and do our job, keep our heads down,” he said Monday. “I think emergency management has to stay apolitical obviously. My goal is save lives and sustain lives. Disasters do not discriminate between politicians.”

In the last six weeks FEMA has responded to four hurricanes, including three of which were major hurricanes, officials said.

“It’s been an amazing hurricane season so far,” Long said.

Beginning with Hurricane Harvey in August, nearly 3.5 million people have registered for individual assistance under FEMA, Long said. He said so far about 350,000 Puerto Ricans have registered for aid.

“That number is going to grow tremendously as we continue to locate and get people entered into the system,” he said.

Thompson said the congressional delegation asked Gov. Rossello to provide an assessment of damage as soon as possible. The House is expected to consider another round of disaster aid funding this week.

“I left there feeling like Puerto Rico needs a hell of a lot more help than one can imagine,” he said.

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Embarking On A Puerto Rican FEMA Aid Mission (VIDEO)

[CNN](#), October 7, 2017

CNN's Leyla Santiago goes on a black hawk mission to show viewers the new sense of urgency in Puerto Rico.

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FEMA Chief: Political Disputes Hurting Puerto Rico Relief

By Luis Alonso Lugo

[Associated Press](#), October 9, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) — Political differences are hurting the U.S. government's response to victims of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency said Monday. He did not identify which individual officials he blamed, but the mayor in San Juan has drawn the ire of President Donald Trump for her criticism about how quickly aid is reaching people on the island.

"The unity is not where I want it to be," FEMA Administrator Brock Long said. "When you cannot get elected officials at the local level come to a joint FEMA office because they disagree with the politics of the governor, it makes things difficult and the information fragmented."

Earlier Monday, Long said in television interviews that he had "filtered out" San Juan Mayor Carmen Cruz, Trump's most vocal critic about the hurricane response. Cruz's spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment; his phone rang unanswered and his voicemail was full.

Cruz complained Monday morning via Twitter that "San Juan legislators arrived to the Emergency Operations Center to discuss debris and flooding. The mayor was not invited."

On Sunday she had tweeted: "Power collapses in San Juan hospital with 2 patients being transferred out. Have requested support from @FEMA_Brock NOTHING!"

Cruz backs the independence of Puerto Rico from the United States but is a member of the Popular Democratic Party, which supports maintaining the territorial status quo.

Gov. Ricardo Rossello supports the island becoming another U.S. state.

Long on Monday expressed frustration with the criticism his agency has faced. He attributed the criticism to the inability to disseminate messages to the population via social media or cell phones because the telecommunications were disabled.

"That is a lesson learned," Long said.

Long said 16,000 federal and military assets are on the ground in Puerto Rico and about 350,000 Puerto Ricans have registered so far in the FEMA system to receive financial assistance. As of Sunday, FEMA said, nearly 12 percent of customers have electricity on the island and about 57 percent of customers of the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority have drinking water.

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Mayor Of Puerto Rico's Capital Who Was Previously Singled Out By Trump Comes Under New Criticism From FEMA Head

By Laura King

[Los Angeles Times](#), October 8, 2017

The Trump administration is brushing off fresh criticism from the mayor of San Juan over the federal government's recovery effort in hurricane-battered Puerto Rico.

William "Brock" Long, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, on Sunday dismissed the latest pleas for urgent assistance from the mayor, Carmen Yulin Cruz, as "political noise."

"We filtered out the mayor a long time ago," Long said on ABC's "This Week" when asked about a pair of early morning tweets from Cruz, in which she said she had unsuccessfully sought help from FEMA after the power failed at a major hospital.

Referring to FEMA, the mayor added sarcastically, "Oh sorry they are collecting data."

Last week President Trump in a tweet suggested Cruz is a "politically motivated ingrate." She had made a number of pointed public criticisms of the pace and scope of the federal relief effort after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico on Sept. 20, wrecking the electricity grid and leaving many of its 3.4 million people desperate for food, water and gasoline.

Trump visited the U.S. territory on Tuesday and hailed the "amazing job" being done by federal officials in rushing in supplies and working to restore electricity and power. The president raised eyebrows when he alluded again to the cost of the recovery effort – an observation he has not made about the ongoing expense of helping Texas and Louisiana after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma – and told officials that they should be proud that the death toll had been low compared to that in the "real catastrophe" of Hurricane Katrina, which struck New Orleans in 2005.

The president repeated his self-congratulatory assessments about his administration's work in Puerto Rico again on Saturday night, in a television interview with the conservative former governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, on the Christian cable network TBN.

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FEMA Removes — Then Restores — Statistics About Drinking Water Access And Electricity In Puerto Rico From Website

By Jenna Johnson

[Washington Post](#), October 6, 2017

Update: As of Friday afternoon, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is once again reporting two key statistics – the percentage of Puerto Ricans who have access to drinking water and the percentage of the island that has power – on its webpage tracking the federal response to Hurricane Maria.

As of Wednesday, half of Puerto Ricans had access to drinking water and 5 percent of the island had electricity, according to statistics published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency on its Web page documenting the federal response to Hurricane Maria.

By Thursday morning, both of those key metrics were no longer on the Web page.

FEMA spokesman William Booher noted that both measures are still being reported on a website maintained by the office of Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rosselló, www.status.pr. According to that website, which is in Spanish, 9.2 percent of the island now has power and 54.2 percent of residents have access to drinking water. Booher said that these measures are also

shared in news conferences and media calls that happen twice a day, but he didn't elaborate on why they are no longer on the main FEMA page.

"Our mission is to support the governor and his response priorities through the unified command structure to help Puerto Ricans recover and return to routines. Information on the stats you are specifically looking for are readily available" on the website maintained by the governor's office, Booher said.

The statistics that are on the FEMA page, as of Thursday afternoon, include these: There are now 14,000 federal workers on the ground in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, up from 12,300 earlier in the week. All airports, federally maintained ports and post offices are open. More than 30 miles of roadway have been cleared, up from about 20 miles earlier in the week. About 65 percent of grocery stores have reopened, along with nearly all hospitals and dialysis centers. And 64 percent of wastewater treatment plants are working on generator power.

Those statistics illustrate President Trump's assertions that the island is quickly making tremendous strides toward full recovery and that the media have exaggerated the conditions on the ground. He has noted that despite the force of the storms that hit Puerto Rico, the death toll is not as high as it was after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when about 1,800 people were killed. Officials have said that it could be months before power and water are fully restored to the island, especially in rural, isolated areas.

Trump, who visited Puerto Rico on Tuesday, has repeatedly noted that the infrastructure of the financially struggling island was already weak before the hurricane hit. In a series of tweets Sept. 25, Trump wrote that Puerto Rico was "already suffering from broken infrastructure & massive debt" and had an "old electrical grid, which was in terrible shape." During his visit, Trump told reporters that it's difficult to fix the power grid because it "was devastated before the hurricanes even hit," and that federal workers have been bringing dozens of generators to the island to power hospitals, government buildings, shelters and other key locations.

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Puerto Rico Wants \$4.6 Billion From Congress To Meet 'Immediate Emergency Needs'

By Jessica Kwong

[Newsweek](#), October 9, 2017

Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello has requested that Congress allocate \$4.6 billion "to meet the immediate emergency needs" of the hurricane-ravaged island and to help soften the blow to its economy.

In letters to congressional leaders and President Donald Trump dated Saturday and shared on Twitter Monday, Rossello asked that Congress "strongly consider" offering funding beyond the Federal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Relief Fund.

Other requests include \$3.2 billion in community development block grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, \$500 million in community disaster loan program funding from the Department of Homeland Security and \$500 million in social services block grants from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Rossello also requested smaller amounts of money from the Department of Transportation, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education.

“We are grateful for the federal emergency assistance that has been provided so far,” Rossello wrote. “However, absent extraordinary measures to address the halt in economic activity in Puerto Rico, the humanitarian crisis will deepen, and the unmet basic needs of the American citizens of Puerto Rico will become even greater.”

In his letter, Rossello said the “unprecedented island-wide devastation” from Hurricane Maria has led to an independent damage estimate of about \$95 billion—equal to about 150 percent of Puerto Rico’s gross national product.

“As a result, in addition to the immediate humanitarian crisis, Puerto Rico is on the brink of a massive liquidity crisis that will intensify in the immediate future,” Rossello wrote.

The Trump administration last week sent a \$29 billion disaster relief fund request to Congress to deal with the aftermath of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, but did not detail how much was intended for Puerto Rico. The House could take up the issue this week.

On Monday, meanwhile, Rossello ordered an investigation into water distribution on the island after complaints from people in some areas that authorities were not delivering supplies. Three weeks after Hurricane Maria made landfall, drinking water has been restored to almost 60 percent of the island, yet only to about 20 percent in some parts of the north, according to the governor.

“If there is a place, a locality that is not delivering food to the people of Puerto Rico that need it, there’s going to be some hell to pay,” Rossello told CNN.

Meanwhile, the federal government on Sunday night allowed its 10-day waiver of the Jones Act, under which only American vessels may make cargo shipments between U.S. ports, to expire, barring foreign boats from providing further aid.

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Most Of Puerto Rico Remains Dark Nearly Three Weeks After Storm

By Mark Chediak

[Bloomberg News](#), October 9, 2017

It’s been almost three weeks since Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico and most of the island is still without electricity.

The U.S. Department of Energy said Monday that 85 percent of customers lack power. Some portions of feeder lines have been restored and about 30 percent of the island’s substations are back online, the agency said.

Crews are trickling in to help the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority restore service, which could be out for months.

The slow pace of the recovery has prodded Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello to ask Tesla Inc.’s Elon Musk for help rebuilding the grid with solar and batteries. The U.S. solar industry is also airlifting gear to the island as part of a humanitarian effort and to show how its technology can help keep the lights on after a natural disaster.

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Minus Electrical Grid, Puerto Rico Becomes Generator Island

By Richard Fausset, Frances Robles and Deborah Acosta

[New York Times](#), October 7, 2017

SAN JUAN, P.R. — Like many other frivolous things on the island these days, the shiny motorcycles at the Planet Honda showroom have been pushed to the side.

In their place are dozens of folding chairs, and on Thursday morning, they were all filled with Puerto Ricans waiting to buy the most essential machines on the post-hurricane landscape: portable generators, to light their powerless homes.

María Aguilera, 57, a teacher, was waiting in the line that had formed outside the showroom Thursday morning. When the sun sets these days, she said, she relies on candles for light. And like everyone else in Puerto Rico — including Gov. Ricardo A. Rosselló — Ms. Aguilera said she had no idea when the power grid might be restored.

“From the things I’ve seen with the infrastructure,” she said, “it could be months.”

Hurricane Maria’s near total destruction of the commonwealth’s electric power grid has transformed Puerto Rico into Generator Island. Running on gas or diesel, and ranging from lawn mower to moving-truck size, the generators are the only option for the roughly 90 percent of the island that has no access to the decimated grid. Generators now power big-box stores, high-rise apartment buildings, auto shops, fast-food restaurants, wastewater treatment plants and little country homes. And their low, incessant groan is the new drone note in the discordant symphony of post-storm Puerto Rican life.

The generators are a temporary fix that is raising health and safety concerns and highlighting the stark divisions of class in a place with a 45 percent poverty rate. They are also the only option for most Puerto Ricans for now, as the island struggles with restoring its electrical system — by far the most important and complex challenge the storm has presented.

In a news conference on Friday, Mr. Rosselló could not say when the system, which was infamously fragile before the storm, would be fully restored.

“There is no estimated date right now,” he said. “We have established, right at the beginning of this week, we want to have 10 percent of the energy generation in Puerto Rico. Now we’re up to 10.6 percent. And our expectation is, within the next month, to have 25 percent.”

Many big-box stores and hardware stores are selling out of generators for home use. Julito Ramírez, the Planet Honda general manager, said that his company was having a hard time keeping up with demand, selling 250 to 300 units per day. After ordering all of the generators he could find in the United States, he has turned to a cache he found in Canada.

“We are in that cycle of finding and bringing, and finding and bringing,” Mr. Ramírez said. The generator everyone wants, he said, is a \$6,000 model that can run a home air-conditioning system. The biggest model he had in stock this week was a \$2,300 machine that can run a refrigerator, some lights, a washing machine — but not an air conditioner.

For one customer, Victor Negrón, it would have to do. He said his old generator had given out two days earlier. “I’ve had to go to hotels to charge my phones,” said Mr. Negrón, 50, a health care executive. “We’ve lost all of the food in our refrigerator.”

The storm destroyed 85 percent of the island’s energy transmission and distribution system, and the fix could cost \$5 billion, said Ricardo Ramos, chief executive of the beleaguered Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, known as Prepa. The public utility is saddled with \$9 billion in debt and filed for bankruptcy in July. The Puerto Rican government also filed a form of bankruptcy in May.

The Trump administration has asked Congress to approve a \$29 billion aid package for Puerto Rico, as well as for hurricane-damaged Florida and Texas. But in the days after September 20, when Hurricane Maria strafed Puerto Rico, Prepa’s money troubles made it

“almost impossible” to pay the large contracts required to bring in other states’ power companies to help restore the grid, said José E. Sánchez, a director with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the head of the task force to restore power in Puerto Rico.

“It is not only personnel, but all the trucks and materials,” Mr. Sánchez said in an email. “That could cost millions of dollars.”

But Meena Dayak, a spokeswoman for the American Public Power Association, the trade group that coordinates the state-to-state mutual aid networks for public power utilities, said that Prepa never reached out to them for help.

“The way our mutual aid works is we can only go in if help has been requested,” she said over the phone on Friday.

Mr. Ramos, Prepa’s chief executive, said he did request help but when none came, he hired a Montana-based company, Whitefish Energy Holdings, to restore many of the power lines. Mr. Ramos said 200 subcontractors were already on the ground.

Andy Techmanski, chief executive of Whitefish, said that a shortage of housing for his crews meant that only 75 were on the island, and that clogged ports were making it a challenge to bring in heavy equipment.

He also said it would take six months or longer for all of Puerto Rico to have its power restored.

The rebuilding will be particularly difficult because many lines stretch across the island’s mountainous interior. There is also the question of whether Puerto Rico should modernize its rickety and outmoded system while it rebuilds. On Friday, the governor said that a modernization effort would “run parallel” with the effort to simply restore power. He said he has begun speaking with Elon Musk, the Tesla chief executive, about ways to increase green energy options for Puerto Rico, which received just 2 percent of its power from renewable sources before the storm. (Mr. Musk said on Twitter Thursday that rebuilding the island’s grid with independent solar and battery systems “could be done.”)

But Mr. Sánchez said that the assignment from the Federal Emergency Management Authority is to repair the system only. “We are there to repair-replace, but not to augment,” he said.

As he waited to buy his generator, Mr. Negrón sympathized with the governor. The island needed a better power system, he said. But people did not want to wait. His mother, he said, “wants her electric now.”

In the meantime, the generators rumble on, though not without problems. A few blocks from the Honda store, the Hospital San Francisco has had two generators fail since the storm, resulting in the evacuation of patients, according to El Nuevo Dia, a local newspaper. In a visit to the hospital Thursday, the lights were on, and a worker said a backup generator was powering them. But hospital officials declined a request for comment.

Across town at the Costco, Juan Torres, an assistant manager, showed off the massive, truck-size generator that the business, like many here, had installed before the storm. Mr. Torres said it was burning 1,000 gallons of diesel per day.

But Mr. Torres said that home generators normally offered at the store were sold out.

Across the island, the Army Corps of Engineers has set up 34 huge generators so far, running everything from police departments to water pumping facilities to a Prepa office, according to Lisa Hunter, a spokeswoman for the Corps. Corps officials said on Friday that 177 other generators arrived late in the week, with some of them headed to the United States Virgin Islands.

Camilla Feibelman, a founder of the Puerto Rico chapter of the Sierra Club who currently runs the Rio Grande chapter, said that Facebook was full of complaints about the generator noise on the island these days.

More seriously, she said, generators can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning when misused — a common concern among officials in post-storm environments. Last month, three people in Orange County, Fla., died from carbon monoxide poisoning after running a generator inside their homes.

Adriana González, a Sierra Club organizer in Puerto Rico, said the high cost of a generator “creates a disparity” between rich and poor. In her neighborhood, she said, “you have one house illuminated, and then total darkness for like a block.”

Mr. Ramírez, the Honda store manager, said that some generators were stolen from the showroom in the days just after the storm. So the store now makes the sale in the showroom, then has customers pick up their generators from a warehouse a day later.

If nothing else, it is a good time to be a generator repairman like José Miguel Márquez, 35. Mr. Márquez said he was so busy these days that the biggest problem is finding time to deposit his checks at the bank.

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Big Tech Has Big Plans To Help Reconnect Puerto Rico

By Matt O'Brien

[Associated Press](#), October 7, 2017

Facebook and Google once aimed to connect the world. Now they would be happy just to reconnect part of it.

In the wake of Hurricane Maria, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg pledged to send a “connectivity team” to help restore communications in ravaged Puerto Rico. Google parent company Alphabet offered to send its Wi-Fi balloons. They were among several tech companies proposing disaster response ideas, most aimed at getting phone and internet service up and running.

Some of these plans, of course, are more aspirational than others.

BATTERY POWER

Tesla CEO Elon Musk often takes to Twitter to mull over ideas, but on Friday his musings about sending his company’s solar-powered batteries to help restore Puerto Rico’s power attracted the attention of the island’s governor.

“Let’s talk,” said Gov. Ricardo Rossello in a Friday tweet.

Musk agreed. Hours later, he announced he was delaying the unveiling of Tesla’s new semi-truck and diverting resources, in part to “increase battery production for Puerto Rico and other affected areas.”

The need for help in restoring power and communication after Hurricane Maria is great: The Puerto Rican energy authority reported Saturday that about 88 percent of the island is still without power. The Federal Communications Commission said Saturday that 82 percent of cell sites remain out in Puerto Rico; 58 percent are out of service in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The FCC’s daily status report also shows significant wireline, TV and radio outages remain in both U.S. territories. The agency formed a task force this week and approved an advance of \$77 million to support carriers working to restore telecommunications services.

VAGUE PROMISES

But many offers of help from big companies remain somewhat vague. Google parent company Alphabet has proposed launching balloons over the island to bring Wi-Fi service to hard-to-reach places, as it has in other parts of the world.

The FCC announced Saturday that it's approved an experimental license for Project Loon to operate in Puerto Rico. But that doesn't mean it will be able to get them in the air anytime soon.

"We're grateful for the support of the FCC and the Puerto Rican authorities as we work hard to see if it's possible to use Loon balloons to bring emergency connectivity to the island during this time of need," said Libby Leahy, a spokesman for Alphabet's X division.

But there are limitations, she said Saturday.

"To deliver signal to people's devices, Loon needs to be integrated with a telco partner's network — the balloons can't do it alone," she said, adding that the company is "making solid progress on this next step."

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Cisco Systems has sent a tactical team and says it is working with local government, emergency responders and service providers to facilitate restoration and recovery efforts. The company, along with Microsoft and others, backs the NetHope consortium, which specializes in setting up post-disaster communication networks and has field teams now operating in Puerto Rico and several other Caribbean islands.

"Communication is critical during a disaster," Zuckerberg said after the hurricane hit, announcing that employees from his company's connectivity team — the same group working to build high-altitude drones that can beam internet service down to Earth — were heading to Puerto Rico. But with its aircraft still in the testing phase, the company said Friday that the engineers it's sent to Puerto Rico are focused on providing support to NetHope's teams.

SMALLER ORGANIZATIONS

Much of the ground work is being spearheaded by nonprofit organizations and small firms with expertise in rural or emergency communications.

Lexington, Massachusetts-based Vanu Inc., which sets up wireless communications networks in rural parts of the United States, Africa and India, is sending dozens of its small, solar-powered cellular base stations to volunteer crews on the ground in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Aid workers are pairing Vanu's devices with other technology, such as inflatable satellite antennas.

After setting up a network on the island of Vieques, off the main island of Puerto Rico, one team watched from a roof as local residents started getting text alerts from family members who had been trying to get in touch.

"They noticed everyone in the plaza pulling their phones out," said CEO Vanu Bose. "You don't have to announce you've lit up coverage. People know right away."

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Nearly 3 Weeks After Hurricane Maria, Distributing Aid Across Puerto Rico Is A Mess

By Oren Dorell

[USA Today](#), October 9, 2017

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The Auxilio Mutuo Hospital here can't figure out how to get specialized medical supplies from the nearby airport. A Puerto Rican in Tampa found the quickest way to deliver help to her hometown was to do it in person. And shipping containers filled with emergency goods are piling up at the Port of San Juan.

Nearly three weeks after Hurricane Maria devastated this U.S. territory in the Caribbean, individuals and charities on the U.S. mainland trying to send supplies to the island are facing a series of bottlenecks that are keeping help from reaching those most in need.

The barriers range from a lack of communication to blocked roads to a shortage of vehicles and drivers to make deliveries.

As a result, one Port of San Juan terminal is storing 3,400 containers — more than double the usual number, said Jose "Pache" Ayala, vice president and general manager for Puerto Rico at Crowley Maritime Corp.

Because of tangled power lines across roads, washed out bridges and highways and knocked out cellphone towers and radio antennas across the island, materials are leaving the Crowley terminal gate at 70% the normal rate before the storm, Ayala said.

The backlog affects goods and equipment from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, such as food and bottled water, bucket trucks, front-end loaders and 275,000 gallons of diesel and 75,000 gallons of gasoline.

"That relief cargo has priority," Ayala said. It also affects commercial cargo such as building materials and medications that are also in great demand, he said.

"It's easier to help internationally than it is in Puerto Rico," said Neil Frame with Operation USA in Los Angeles. The non-profit, which ships donated medical supplies into disaster areas around the world, has not yet found a way to deliver goods onto the U.S. territory.

His group is currently shipping supplies to Mexico after the earthquake and also helping in Texas after Hurricane Harvey, but there it was easy — workers just drove down and found people who could help distribute.

Because of lingering poor communications since Maria struck here Sept. 20, his group has only been able to connect with eight of about 60 hospitals on the island. "You know that the ones that really need it are the ones we haven't been able to talk to," he said.

Still, he has neonatal equipment that one hospital is waiting for and is planning to ship pharmaceuticals that have a shelf life, so they will not last if they wait in port.

Communications are still spotty and a major impediment for shippers and truckers.

"There are some packages sent by family to someone in Puerto Rico that because communications are so bad the person here doesn't know (it's coming)," Ayala said.

Trucker Ricardo Carbonell, 42, said damaged roads, downed trees and low-hanging power lines form another obstacle to get goods to those in need. And his company won't deliver if dispatchers can't get ahold of the recipient in advance.

"If there's no communications, they call and call, nobody answers the phone, and we don't bring them anything," he said.

Another trucker, José Vasquez, 46, of Toa Baja, described how he took a container last week from San Juan to Rio Piedra, unloaded it and brought the empty container back to Crowley. Usually he'd reload immediately, but since Maria knocked out the radio antennas between San Juan and his home base, he had to drive an hour to Toa Baja to get an order for his next load.

Normally, "I'd be gone in 10 minutes," he said. "Now I have to go there, one hour, and come back, another hour, to get another load out."

At Auxilio Mutuo Hospital, the only facility currently performing heart surgery on the island, administrators are having difficulty getting the specialized supplies needed for transplant patients.

“The issue is how do we get it from the airport to here,” said Carlos Méndez, associate administrator at Auxilio Mutuo. “We cannot communicate with anyone at the airport.”

Michael Fernandez, executive director at CARAS de las Americas, said some shipments languish for more than a week until the usual import tax is lifted for the emergency aid. And even now, “shipments are flowing, and a lot of non-profits are up and running, but that doesn’t mean aid coming from the government is actually getting there,” Fernandez said.

Liza Minnelli Pacheco, 43, a native of Guayanilla who now lives in Tampa, said Puerto Ricans want to send goods to relatives but don’t know what to send or how to arrange for the items to be picked up or delivered.

She and her friends in Florida from Guayanilla scrimped to raise money to deliver the aid in person. She traveled to her hometown on the hard-hit southern coast of Puerto Rico with a cooler full of insulin, some of which she gave to a city worker for a resident who had run out of her medicine.

“If a family in the U.S. wants to send things, it’s difficult,” Minnelli Pacheco said.

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DHS Won’t Renew Waiver That Let Puerto Rico Import For Cheap

[Daily Beast](#), October 9, 2017

The Department of Homeland Security will not renew its waiver to temporarily suspend the Jones Act, the department announced Monday. After Hurricane Maria wreaked destruction on Puerto Rico, the DHS temporarily waived the shipping law that bars the island from receiving goods carried on ships built in or operated by other nations, effectively doubling the price of imports in Puerto Rico. The waiver allowed Puerto Rico to import food, water, and supplies more quickly and for less money while the island recovered from the hurricane. Without the waiver, imports are expected to slow, and double in price again.

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FEMA Still Planning Additional Influx Of Federal Personnel In Puerto Rico

By Eric Katz

[Government Executive](#), October 6, 2017

The Trump administration on Thursday promised a large increase in the number of federal personnel on the ground in Puerto Rico, noting it still has a significant amount of short and long-term work ahead of it to help the hurricane-ravaged island.

Federal agencies have already deployed 14,000 personnel to the island and the U.S. Virgin Islands to deal with the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but it plans to expand those numbers going forward. Most of those already deployed came from the Defense Department, which has sent 9,000 individuals to assist in the recovery. FEMA itself has sent 700 employees, while the remainder have come from agencies across government.

“We are going to branch out,” FEMA Deputy Coordinating Officer Tito Hernandez told reporters on Thursday. Assistance personnel “are going to grow in number from DoD and all agencies.”

FEMA Administrator Brock Long, who previously called the Maria response effort the “most logistically challenging event” in U.S. history, said this week his agency would be in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands “for years.”

The agency, dealing with the destruction wrought by hurricanes Maria, Irma and Harvey, is currently spending \$200 million per day on activities funded by its Disaster Relief Fund. President Trump on Wednesday asked Congress for an emergency supplement of nearly \$13 billion to support those efforts. Congress last month approved \$15 billion in emergency funding after Harvey, which was split between FEMA’s disaster fund and Housing and Urban Development Community Block Development Grants. The disaster fund saw an additional \$6.7 billion deposit on Oct.1 due to a scheduled increase for the new fiscal year.

Federal responders in Puerto Rico are currently focusing on providing food and commodities, reopening hospitals and providing generator support. Boosting communications is also a priority, Hernandez said, but presents a much longer-term problem because antennas in the island’s mountain ranges were destroyed. A Navy hospital ship, the USNS Comfort, has arrived at Puerto Rico and is now receiving patients.

In addition to Defense and FEMA, the departments of Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Energy; other Homeland Security components such as Customs and Border Protection; the Environmental Protection Agency; and others continue to provide assistance in Puerto Rico.

While it is already dealing with three disaster response efforts, FEMA is already preparing for the next one. Nate, which officials say could reach hurricane strength by the time it reaches U.S. land this weekend, is set to hit parts of Louisiana, Alabama and Florida.

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OTHER PUERTO RICO NEWS

Puerto Rico Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Slowed By Hurricane Maria

By Laura Kelly

[Washington Times](#), October 9, 2017

Hurricane damage to Puerto Rico’s pharmaceutical industry could hamper the U.S. mainland’s access to critical medications, including treatments for cancer, diabetes and heart disease, the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration says.

Dr. Scott Gottlieb has said the devastation in Puerto Rico could have broad challenges and implications on the medical product manufacturing base on the island. He called it a “critical health issue for Americans” that could have “significant public health consequences.”

On Friday, Dr. Gottlieb issued a statement saying the FDA is keeping a close watch on the most critical medical products and has stepped in to secure fuel to maintain production lines and logistical support.

Wendy Perry, vice president of the Pharmaceutical Industry Association of Puerto Rico, said Friday that about half of the island’s manufacturing plants were operating, although some only partially.

“Within the next week, we expect the rest of the manufacturing plants to start operating again,” Ms. Perry said by phone from Puerto Rico.

She said her organization is in direct communication with government heads about the priority and importance of bringing the plants back online.

“It’s important to understand we’re managing a situation that, even though we do have the plans, it is a catastrophic hurricane — something we have never seen before. Although we now are in control and we can execute all the plans for the short term, we have to continue to work together with the government in order to address the issues of electricity and telecommunications,” she said.

Puerto Rico’s pharmaceutical manufacturing business is vital to the economy, Ms. Perry said, because it represents 30 percent of the island’s total gross domestic product and provides salaries for employees at almost three times the typical rate for Puerto Ricans.

“That is why we have all the attention and resources from our local government, and I do have to stress the fact that they have been very open, we have communication channels open directly with each one of the heads of the local authorities with whom we have to deal with in order to ensure business continuing,” she said.

Puerto Rico’s drug manufacturing industry employs about 90,000 people and accounts for 72 percent of the island’s exports, representing about \$14.5 billion in revenue, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Hurricane Maria decimated Puerto Rico when it made landfall on Sept. 20 with sustained winds up to 155 mph, knocking out the power grid of the entire island.

Almost three weeks later, the island is running mostly on generator power, with limited cellphone service and debris blocking transportation routes.

About 50 pharmaceutical companies have manufacturing plants on the island. Although some companies reached for comment said they sustained only minimal or moderate damage, the challenge of operating on generator power is not meant to last more than a few weeks.

Employees are struggling to access their work locations and, along with other Puerto Ricans, are dealing with food, water and fuel shortages.

On the impact on the pharmaceutical supply chain, Dr. Gottlieb has said the FDA is worried about preserving medications, in part by shuttling them off the island, as well as providing relief to Puerto Ricans affected by the storm.

The FDA said it is worried about 40 high-priority drugs but has not named the exact medications that would be in short supply if power is not restored to plants and transportation routes are not cleared.

The FDA said it is working with at least five companies to prevent critical shortages of medical products in Puerto Rico.

Of the companies reached for comment — including Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Amgen and Eli Lilly — none reported major damage to its site. The companies said they were using generator power to keep the plants running. They also reported monitoring product inventory levels and supply routes while keeping manufacturing levels up at other international sites.

Among the products produced on the island are life-saving medications used to treat cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and HIV.

“Overall, our facilities fared very well given the magnitude of the storm, and we’ve begun to restart some operations under generator power,” Johnson & Johnson spokesman Ernie Knewitz said in an email. The company has about 3,600 employees and operates seven facilities on the island.

“We have a strong local team working through incredible logistical challenges, and we’re seeing progress each day. We are also closely monitoring our product inventory levels and will work to ensure all critical needs are met,” Mr. Knewitz said.

Pfizer said in a statement that it is working to repair damage and restore electricity to its facilities, relying on generator power and unsure how long it will be until power is restored.

“Overall, we have a healthy supply of finished goods available for patients and do not currently see a risk to patient supply,” the company said. “We are monitoring the supply situation closely and utilizing alternative manufacturing locations where possible. We remain in regular contact with the FDA and regulators from other countries.”

A spokesman for Eli Lilly, known for making diabetes medication as well as cancer and cardiovascular drugs, said its facilities were built to withstand hurricane conditions and that preparations before the storms included halting production, locking down facilities and instructing employees to stay home.

“Our inventory strategy for products is designed to protect against this type of event, and we see no product supply risk to global markets at this time. The affiliate sustained minimal damage as well,” the company said in a statement.

Nicolette Louissaint is executive director of Healthcare Ready, which helps coordinate with public and private entities to ensure a supply chain of medical equipment to disaster areas. She said Hurricane Maria’s devastating effects on the island and logistical challenges have slowed relief efforts.

“We still are learning about the overall impacts, especially the health impacts of Maria,” Ms. Louissaint said. “One of the things that we have to continue to think about is how we track and care for the patients that are still at risk. There have been reports that are coming out, and we’re starting to learn more about what the true medical needs are, but keeping our eye on that is going to be really important over the next few weeks, especially.”

Healthcare Ready has been working for six weeks straight to respond to the needs of people caught in the paths of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria.

Ms. Louissaint said Puerto Rico is still about 94 percent without power with only 12 percent cell reception. While hospitals, and some people, are powering with generators, damage to roads has slowed access to diesel and gasoline.

“We’re starting to see that gasoline is becoming more available, and that really is important because it allows people to start to go to work,” she said.

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HURRICANE MARIA USVI

EDC Company To Announce Major Donation To USVI During Governor’s Press Briefing

By Ernice Gilbert

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 10, 2017

The Government of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of its people, will receive a donation from an EDC firm said to be in the millions, The Consortium has learned. The announcement will be made today during Governor Kenneth Mapp’s press briefing, which will be held at 11:00 a.m. in St. Thomas.

The donation will coincide with the Mapp administration's announcement of an organization that will determine how funds collected on behalf of the USVI, through USVI Recovery, will be spent. The organization will include private and public sector individuals, and operate independent from the government's influence, Mr. Mapp has said.

On September 25, Mr. Mapp said the territory had received \$1.4 million through the website, a number that has most likely grown since the announcement. Initially, the entity was called "Virgin Islands Hurricane Recovery Task Force", but the governor told The Consortium at a recent press briefing that the name had changed.

The press briefing will be held at the West Indian Company (WICO) conference room in St. Thomas. There, Mr. Mapp will also give latest updates relative to the territory's recovery efforts following the two deadly storms.

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WAPA Currently Focused On Reconstructing 'Backbone' Of Territory's Electrical System, New Updates Announced

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 10, 2017

Here's WAPA's latest power and potable water restoration update.

ELECTRIC SYSTEM

Restoration and reconstruction work continued in both districts on Monday. The focus remains on reconstructing the backbone of the electrical system. The primary electrical circuits that are not currently energized must be reconstructed prior to service restoration to commercial or residential customers.

On St. Croix, following last week's installation of new utility poles from the Richmond power plant to Five Corners, crews continued stringing new primary lines along the path of Feeder 6A. On Monday, two additional buildings at the JFK housing community were energized and almost a dozen street lights were energized from the power plant to the LBJ housing community.

On St. John, crews continued to rebuild various electrical circuits in Cruz Bay as well as in the Gallows Point and Grande Bay areas.

On St. Thomas, crews worked on Feeder 8A developing primary circuits from Banco Popular west to Bellows International while energizing some customers along Harwood Highway. Crews also planted poles along the path of Feeder 7A. A portion of Feeder 7B, in the Sugar Estate area, was energized as well as WAPA's Tutu electrical substation. Crews continued to reconstruct a transmission circuit to interconnect the Tutu and East End substations. Approximately 25% of this work is completed.

WAPA personnel has removed electrical meters at locations where damage was apparent to either an electrical meter base and/or weather head. In these instances, the customer is responsible for all repairs. WAPA will not reinstall meters until repairs are made by a licensed electrician. Home and business owners are advised to make repairs to their damaged weather heads and or meter bases as soon as possible. Once crews have reached your neighborhood,

customers who have not had their weather head or meter base repaired, will not have service immediately restored.

POTABLE WATER SYSTEM

While water service remains available throughout Cruz Bay, St. John, there are two days of emergency water storage on the island.

There are six days of emergency water storage on St. Thomas. The Water Division continues to work with electrical crews to re-energize additional pump stations. The restoration of the pump stations will facilitate the resumption of water service to areas including Contant Knolls and Savan. The Lindbergh Bay pump station was returned to service over the last few days.

On St. Croix, there are four days of emergency water storage. WAPA is pumping at full capacity at Contentment, Mount Welcome and Concordia pump stations. This has facilitated water service to mid-island and Frederiksted town.

GENERAL INFORMATION

All electrical problems must be reported to the WAPA Emergency Call Centers to be properly documented and tracked. These problems include, but are not limited to, electrical service interruptions as well as damaged and downed facilities such as poles, transformers, and power lines. The WAPA Call Centers are now operating 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., seven days per week. St. Thomas – St. John: 340-774-1424 and St. Croix: 340-773-0150.

Customer service offices in both districts are functional. On St. Croix, customers can conduct business at the Authority's offices in Sunny Isle. In the St. Thomas-St. John district, a temporary customer service location has been established at WAPA's offices in Port of Sale Mall. In both districts, customer service representatives are available from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday-Friday. Self-service payment kiosks are also available at both locations during these hours.

WAPA's office telephones are operational in both districts. St. Croix: 340-773-2250 and St. Thomas – St. John: 340-774-3552.

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New Viya Network Supporting Wireless Connections on Island

By James Gardner

[St. Thomas Source](#), October 9, 2017

Viya's fast-tracked launch of a new wireless network has helped bring Internet and data services to customers across the territory in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, company officials said Monday.

Speaking at a news conference at Viya's headquarters on St. Thomas, company President and Chief Executive Officer Alvaro Pilar said a new 4G LTE network was planned to be rolled out at the end of September/beginning of October. In the face of the twin storms, Viya was able to "fast forward" the launch so that customers can get online.

It's not perfect, Pilar said, but it's been the quickest way to get way to get people internet – including government agencies ranging from the V.I. Water and Power Authority to the airports.

Viya was the first carrier to establish hotspots on island – federal officials coming in have even been able to take advantage of the service, Pilar said – and has been working with the territory’s two cell phone carriers, Sprint and AT&T, to get their networks back up and running.

Any Sprint customer able to get a Choice Wireless signal is able to tap into that network and use their phones, Pilar said. Meanwhile, Viya has helped to power AT&T generators, clear sites and lend technical support where needed.

Google’s parent company, Alphabet, has received permission from the Federal Communications Commission to launch its Project Loon weather balloons over Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to help restore cell phone connectivity to residents. Pilar said Viya has already touched base with company officials to see if it can be tapped as one of the local carriers whose frequencies can be used as an anchor for the balloons, which will be used as a “base” station to mass deliver voice and data service. (See Related Links below.)

In the meantime, Pilar said Viya owns “a lot” of bandwidth and frequency and plans to take advantage of it. The new Mi-Fi boxes that have brought residents flocking to the company’s offices are being handed out free to Viya customers with high-speed service while non-Viya customers are being signed up for plans. (Questions about billing can be answered at Viya’s website.)

The boxes’ speeds run from 6 megabits to 25, and Pilar said Viya is waiting for FCC approval to lower the frequency on its network from 850 megahertz to 600 to allow for better connectivity inside buildings.

The first set of 5,000 boxes are almost out, and while Pilar said he expects another shipment of 5,000 next week, the next plan is to sell cell phones that can be turned into hot spots for connectivity, he added.

The same plan is in place for St. Croix customers once the network there is lit up, and for St. John. Pilar said residents are also able to take advantage of hot spots while antennas are being put in place to allow residents to tap into the same network in places like Cruz Bay.

Since most of the hardware has been given to customers instead of sold, Pilar commended the FCC for giving the company seven months worth of Universal Service funds – federal funds given monthly to support communications in rural areas – to help boost finances.

Cable service, meanwhile, is dependent on the restoration of electricity throughout the territory, but Pilar said service is up – and is being used in some areas of St. Croix with power – and that Viya is working “hand in hand” with WAPA to get the lines up.

Never famous for its voice over-service, Viya might be the best on island right now, Pilar said, but added that residents should still feel comfortable keeping their landlines if they want to.

Asked Monday if Viya plans to go underground with its infrastructure, Pilar said he hopes to do so for the company's "core network." But while the government is considering it, customers still have to get service in the meantime.

"Were the key to normalcy," he added. "These days, normal is able to go on the internet, watch a movie, go on the internet, read the news or send an email. It's the same as having a cold drink or a shower, people need to feel normal and that's what we're working to achieve."

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St. Croix Residents Express Satisfaction In Mapp Administration's Handling Of Disaster

By Ashley Scotland

[Virgin Islands Consortium](#), October 9, 2017

ST. CROIX — Optimism, patience, progress and community were some of the buzzwords floating around the point of distribution centers on St. Croix last Tuesday. Fifteen days after the USVI felt the first effects of Category 5 Hurricane Maria, The Consortium visited three of St. Croix's 5 distribution centers to get some feedback from the community about the government's response to the aftermath of the storm, and their personal experiences so far on the path to recovery.

Three weeks in, and the lines at the distribution centers are much shorter than they were immediately following the hurricane. Many factors may play a role in that, as the curfew hours continue to ease, giving people more time to maneuver, and stores have reopened. The territory has also seen an exodus of residents who needed to leave for various reasons.

With that being said, residents also praised the improvements at the distribution centers which has contributed to a much faster process of receiving goods. While most people interviewed for this story complained about the chaotic and unorganized setup during the early days of the distribution of goods and supplies, most acknowledged a shift and change as the days continued, and were very complimentary of the assistance provided by National Guardsmen from abroad. This reporter also witnessed the hard work of the local guardsmen providing exemplary service to those that they were serving.

Residents interviewed were mostly satisfied with the progress of the recovery thus far. A young man from the Williams Delight community, which was one of the hardest hit areas on the island, stated, "Things are moving slow, but we are making progress." He spoke of neighbors assisting neighbors in the clearing of roads and yards in his community, which seems to be a common theme in the days following the hurricane. Residents also seemed to agree with the curfew imposed by the administration. One resident felt the curfew should be adjusted so as to give more daylight time for residents to conduct business, telling a story of almost getting into a catastrophic accident during the evening hours as another car swerved into her lane to avoid some wires hanging from a pole.

Aside from those concerns, most residents said the administration was making progress with the resources available, with the presence of road crews throughout the island playing a role in that perception.

Yet, while most residents interviewed for this story felt that progress being made by the administration has been adequate, there were a minority of dissenters, with some incorrectly contending that most roads were cleared by residents and not necessarily government contractors. Others said that the chaotic days following Hurricane Maria and the seeming lack of a plan or any structure set in place for the immediate aftermath of the storm, contributed to some of the looting that occurred. They also pointed to the slow pace of FEMA's Blue Roof program, which Governor Mapp himself has reportedly pointed out to President Donald Trump in a recent face-to-face meeting.

A lot of residents were anxious to see what changes Hurricane Maria will bring. An educator expressed her opinion that, "Things will stay the same, because the people are the same."

What we do know is that thousands of Virgin Islanders left on mercy cruises and flights. It remains to be seen the impact their departure will have on the Virgin Islands economy moving forward, as the territory already suffers from a brain drain epidemic. When living conditions improve, will the Virgin Islands be able to attract back its young talent? Will things remain the same or will Hurricane Maria bring about some change that people desperately want in the way things are done? These questions won't immediately provide answers, but as the weeks, months and years pass — pending the Caribbean and the USVI remain free from major storms — the answers will reveal themselves with consequences accompanying the reality.

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Pence's Visit Was Good, So Donald Trump Doesn't Need To Visit

By Darren Sands

[BuzzFeed](#), October 9, 2017

US Virgin Islands Delegate Stacey Plaskett doesn't believe it's essential to the US Virgin Islands recovery efforts that Donald Trump visit the island territory devastated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Plaskett a week ago, amid a crisis of a lack of media and attention on the extensive damage of her territory, expressed alarm that the aftermath of Puerto Rico's had warranted a visit from President Trump, but that the US Virgin Islands seemed like an apparent afterthought. She made her concerns known in a national appearance with MSNBC's Joy Ann Reid.

Trump tweeted that he "will hopefully be able to stop at the U.S. Virgin Islands" but never made the trip. In an interview with BuzzFeed News, Plaskett said she was able to impart her concern about the American territory's recovery to someone else close to Trump with whom she had been quite impressed: Vice President Mike Pence.

Plaskett's satisfaction with Pence's visit comes just days after Trump visited San Juan, accenting his arrival by flicking several packages of paper towels into an audience of onlookers as if shooting a basketball at a hoop.

She said a solemn Pence visited a small white church that had had two sections of its roof blown off, leaving water and debris all over the floor.

“It has been heartbreaking to see the impact of hurricanes Irma and Maria on the Virgin Islands,” the vice president said before his wife offered residents comfort from the book of Colossians.

In addition to attending a briefing on the recovery effort, the Pences also visited a shelter and participated in a helicopter tour to survey the damage on all three of the US Virgin Islands.

“I think you can tell when someone is putting on a show, but I believe the conversations [the Pences] had with people, young people, the workers, the volunteers were genuine,” Plaskett told BuzzFeed News in an extended interview about the federal government’s response and the recovery effort. “I think that is something that comes across from them. I think because he’s been a governor he understands the human element of supporting people and understanding the day-to-day lives of people who have elected you. And I think that moves him and motivates him and that was clearly evident.”

Plaskett said her constituents are part of the “American experience” and take their role as Americans seriously. To have a sitting US president visit the US Virgin Islands would be “very gratifying” to residents, she said — and indeed a signal that their calls for relief and assistance from the federal government are being taken seriously.

“But is it necessary for us to move on in terms of our rebuilding?” Plaskett said. “I don’t think so.”

Plaskett said she told Pence and his staff that the federal government has an opportunity help overhaul the island’s infrastructure, while there have been struggles with the federal government’s initial response. “When I have had conversations with officials from FEMA going into and talking to people in neighborhoods, we’re seeing the issues people are having getting supplies, and getting support in a timely fashion,” said Plaskett.

“There were challenges that the federal government had that I don’t think we were ready for.”

Plaskett said federal workers were used to providing temporary roofing to homes that were partially destroyed but weren’t used to providing that type of assistance to people whose roofs had been totally ripped off.

“This is a test for the people of the Virgin Islands as a whole,” said Plaskett. “And it’s also a test for the United States and the African diaspora to get engaged to ensure that we’re not forgotten in that rebuilding.”

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Debris Removal Operations Progressing With A \$10 Million Boost From FEMA

[St. Thomas Source](#), October 9, 2017

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing more than \$10 million in expedited funding to support efforts by the U.S. Virgin Islands government and federal partners to clean up and remove the large quantities of debris left by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

“Clearing hurricane-related debris from Virgin Islands roadways and neighborhoods not only helps remove a health and safety hazard, it is a visible sign of recovery for all residents,”

said FEMA's Federal Coordinating Officer William Vogel. "These expedited funds, and more to come, will provide a valuable boost to island communities in their recovery efforts."

Because of the major disaster declarations for the USVI, FEMA is funding 100 percent of the costs of emergency debris clearance for 180 days from the declaration dates – until March 4, 2018, for Hurricane Irma, and March 15, 2018, for Hurricane Maria.

FEMA is providing supplemental funding to the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (VIWMA) for costs to remove eligible household debris that is moved to public rights of way, but residents should follow VIWMA's guidance.

With debris collection underway in residential neighborhoods, VIWMA asks that residents move hurricane-related debris as close to the edge of their property as possible without blocking vehicular traffic flow and to allow for the safe passage of emergency vehicles and repair crews. To have hurricane-related debris picked up it must first be sorted and may not include household garbage.

Waste must be separated into the following four categories:

Whites: appliances such as stoves, refrigerators and microwaves

Electronics: such as radios, computers and TVs

Vegetation: such as trees, branches, grass and plants

Roofing or construction material: galvanized metal, wood, sheetrock, etc.

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NEW YORK CITY

NYCHA Construction Begins Five Years After Sandy

By Nathan Weiser

[Red Hook Star Revue](#), October 9, 2017

"It is a great day for this community," Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez said at the groundbreaking for the construction of Red Hook East and West. "Here we are in a path to recovery. In that sense, we have to make sure the rebuilding we do is one that is built to last."

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), along with elected officials, came to Red Hook last month for a ceremony signifying the start of the much anticipated roof replacements for Red Hook East and West buildings. This will be the first stage of a massive project funded by FEMA to improve conditions at NYCHA, which comes five years after Hurricane Sandy ravaged the neighborhood.

On the morning of September 5, NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye along with 7th District Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Assistant Speaker Felix Ortiz for Assembly District 51 and Red Hook Councilman Carlos Menchaca "broke ground" on the roof of 791 Hicks Street of a \$63 million roof construction project. Red Hook East Tenant Association President Frances Brown and Red Hook West Tenant Association President Lilly Marshall also made their way up to the roof.

The plan is to replace all 28 roofs of the Red Hook Houses by the end of 2019. Replacing the roofs will benefit more than 6,000 residents who will see fewer leaks and a better quality of life than with the roofs they have.

“The people of Red Hook deserve better and I am glad that the administration recognizes that it is about time to move forward in everything that needs to be done in Red Hook,” Ortiz said.

Sandy caused a lot of long-lasting damage to the Red Hook East and West complex and this is a first major step in the rebuilding.

“Today we are moving closer to repairing that damage {from Sandy} by building back stronger with storm resilient technology so that NYCHA residents will be safer in future storms,” Olatoye said in front of 791 Hicks Street.

She went on to say that this project that will be beginning very soon will ensure that NYCHA buildings will be safe in extreme weather events.

“Our Sandy work proves that with sufficient federal funding, public housing can provide safe stable homes in weather events,” Olatoye said. “In Red Hook, we are investing \$500 million to repair all roofs, install a new heating and hot water system, as well as structural reinforcement, flood protection and full backup power new playgrounds and improved retail spaces.”

This \$550 million investment in the Red Hook Houses is part of NYCHA’s Sandy Recovery to Resiliency program to build back stronger than ever. This project will transform the developments into resilient sites that can effectively withstand future weather challenges.

Olatoye also added that \$6 million has been invested into the Red Hook Community Center. This is an unprecedented investment in public housing and Councilman Menchaca wants to make sure that the project is done in the right way.

“The community remembers for such a long time about how much investment has come in but let us not forget that this investment will be the largest of its kind ever to public housing in the country,” Menchaca said. “Nowhere else are we getting almost half a billion dollars that is coming here, but we want to make sure that it is done right. .”

This project, which is in the Capital Projects Division of Recovery and Resiliency, will install new security cameras, door security access systems and replace the exterior site lighting fixtures and bulbs.

Replacing the roofs at Red Hook East and West is the first phase of an almost \$550 million investment in the Red Hook Houses, which is part of NYCHA’s Sandy Recovery to Resiliency program. The program will build the Houses back to be stronger than ever and transform the developments into resilient sites that can effectively withstand future weather challenges.

KPF Contracting Inc was hired to do the construction. They will repair and replace vital infrastructure, and will flood proof to protect against the impacts of climate change, like rising sea-levels. They will also install stand-by back-up generators.

“We have an incredible team at KPF that is one of the best and leading designers in the world,” Menchaca added. “We need to continue to hold them accountable throughout the rest of the process, and I am confident that with your support and with you being in the room and making your voices heard that we are not only going to get new roofs but that we are going to get the jobs that we deserve.”

Congresswoman Velazquez voiced some disappointment that according to her the country is better prepared to respond to a nuclear threat than the nation is to respond to a category five storm. She thinks that we need to learn from Sandy and what has now been happening in Houston.

“I am so happy that my bill passed out of the committee thanks to the leaders in Red Hook that helped me draft this legislation based on our own experiences,” Velazquez added. “Shola, I want to thank you for your incredible leadership, and the residents and the public engagement that has taken place here. I am so thrilled that we were able to secure the federal funding. It took us a while as you know.”

“When natural disaster strikes the federal government must show up and provide the leadership to make families whole,” the Congresswoman said. “We are ready to start the construction of the 28 roofs in these buildings and the senior center. That will be a great addition.”

The Red Hook roofs project will provide new roofs, and will repair and/or replace the parapets and railings at all the 28 high-rise residential buildings within the Red Hook East and West development. These 28 buildings are home to more than 8,000 residents.

“It is like anything else, if you have a strong roof and a strong foundation, then you can take care of the rest inside,” Ortiz said. “We need to prevent the water from continuing to leak into the apartments. I have been to many apartments that have a lot of mold, a lot of paint is falling apart, and I think that is because of the water leaking from the top of the roof.”

According to NYCHA, the new roofing is a top-of-the-line liquid-applied roofing system with a 30-year warranty. The system will provide a better building insulation, reduce the amount of heat retained by the roof and eliminate water intrusion.

“We are very happy that we were able to secure funding for the roofs together with the federal government,” Ortiz said. “I think this is a step in the right direction.”

The second stage of the timeline of improving Red Hook East and West includes basement restoration and flood protection. This stage will begin in early 2018 and be finished at the end of 2019.

The third and fourth stages will both begin in 2018 and be finished by the end of 2021. The third stage will include boiler/generator plant building located on Clinton Street and W 9th St to provide heat and power for the whole East and West development. The third stage will also consist of new MEP annexes above the FEMA flood level.

The fourth stage will include an overall site restoration.

Some of the development improvements during the encompassing project will include replacing the playground including nine lily pad play areas and three larger destination play areas, restoring the retail spaces at building 29 and upgrading the above apartments, constructing elevated courtyards to provide flood protected building entries and replacing the underground electrical wiring system.

According to NYCHA, they will also be removing hazardous materials and cleaning crawl spaces, replacing and/or repairing the doors, fixing the door frames and hardware damaged by water and replacing electrical conduits and plumbing pipes damaged by water in the basement areas.

Additional building improvements will consist of replacing building entrances and improving the back water valves on sewer/storm plumbing lines.

Another mission of the project will be to make the area more resilient. They will dry flood proof areas that are below the FEMA flood level. They will build new boilers and generators and install them above the FEMA flood level.

From an energy perspective, they will be installing backup power generators and will be taking additional site wide energy and sustainability measures. This step is awaiting Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approval.

This massive NYCHA construction project is all scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021.

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Making Rooms: Tour Brooklyn's Slick Disaster House

By Lauren Gill

[Brooklyn Daily](#), October 10, 2017

Get a peek at sweet relief.

Next weekend you can take a tour of a home you will hopefully never have to live in! A prototype house designed for disaster victims will open its doors to visitors on Oct. 14–15 as part of Open House New York, an annual two-day event that grants public access to normally closed spaces across the city. The slick model apartments are much nicer than the typical emergency tents and trailers, and the project's architect wants people to know that it is possible to house catastrophe victims in humane conditions.

“We have to show people everyone deserves to have a quality environment critical to their health and well-being,” said Jim Garrison, a professor at Pratt Institute. “The reason it’s nice is because people have to make it their home.”

The city commissioned the Urban Post-Disaster Housing Prototype shortly after Hurricane Sandy, and it was assembled in a lot Downtown in just 13 and a half hours, creating two three-bedroom apartments and a one-bedroom unit bolted together to make a three-story building.

Garrison designed the housing for dense urban areas, and it emulates the streetscapes of Brooklyn.

“They’re meant to make complete streets like brownstones and townhouses would,” he said.

After a disaster, the housing could be quickly assembled in narrow spaces, such as the Ikea parking lot in Red Hook or next to public housing complexes.

The prototype has been sitting in the lot since it debuted in 2014, and is usually only open by appointment. Garrison would like to see his design deployed to areas hit by recent hurricanes, although there has not been enough support to make it happen.

“It takes a lot of political will and money, we haven’t been able to move on it,” he said.

In addition to the prototype home, Open House New York will also let visitors explore other usually closed Brooklyn sites, including the Sims Sunset Park Material Recovery Facility and the Kingsland Wildflowers Green Roof in Greenpoint. New to the program this year are tours of Bushwick’s Evergreens Cemetery and the Five Boroughs Brewing Company in Sunset Park.

Open House New York (Cadman Plaza East and Red Cross Place Downtown, www.ohny.org). Oct 14–15, every 20 minutes from 10 am–4:40 pm. Free, but RSVP required. Reach reporter Lauren Gill at lgill@cnglocal.com or by calling (718) 260–2511. Follow her on

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OTHER NEW YORK NEWS

L Train Shutdown: L-Pocalypse Or Can’t Bloody L Wait?

By Nikki M. Mascali

[Metro](#), October 10, 2017

Just when you think you’re out, the L train pulls you back in — and leaves you on a platform or on the subway for an undetermined amount of time.

Just yesterday, there were delays in both directions on the beleaguered line due to an unspecified investigation between Jefferson Street and Morgan Avenue. And that came less than a month after two separate issues — a door malfunction followed by a signal issue — crippled the line and stranded straphangers for hours.

The long-lambasted L train shutdown won't happen for another 18 months, but many New Yorkers likely wish it were sooner to end their misery. But that's next to impossible, said Metro columnist and transportation historian and advocate Larry Penner.

"There's so much prior planning necessary before the shutdown, you've got to get it right," he said.

The 15-month shutdown, scheduled to begin in April 2019, will rehabilitate the Canarsie Tunnel, which goes under the East River and was severely damaged by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012.

Since the work includes demolition and reconstruction of the tunnel, tracks and track bed, the L train will only run between Bedford Avenue and Canarsie-Rockaway Parkway, meaning there will not be service to or from Manhattan during that time.

"In fairness, we're a 24/7 city, and with the subway structure fragile as it is, it does make sense to only take care of one corridor at a time," Penner said.

The MTA did not respond to requests for comment and updates on the L train shutdown, but a similar shutdown in 2013 of the Montague Street Tunnel, which the N and R trains use between Manhattan and Brooklyn, opened a month ahead of schedule after 13 months, so there is hope for the L train.

"That was a good model and success story," Penner said. "It's better to go in and get it all done at once than piecemeal. When you have to stop and start work every 15 minutes, you're not being efficient. Plus, the concept of going in and shutting it down makes sense because you save a lot of money."

L train options are out there

Though Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg recently shot down hopes that 14th Street would go car-free or bus-only during the L train shutdown, she did say parts of the thoroughfare may have bus-only access at certain times, Streetsblog reported.

Straphangers can still use the J, M and Z trains to get into Manhattan as well as the NYC Ferry, which Magdalena Mazurek-Nuovo of Williamsburg divorced the L for.

"It was just unbearable," she said of the train. "It's very unpredictable and horrible. I don't even mind being in a crowded train — it was just sometimes there were no trains for a long time."

Astrid Harders, another longtime L rider, said she's curious to see what will really happen with the shutdown. "It might not be that bad — weekends in Williamsburg might be less crowded, less tourists and hungover college kids."

A Chariot awaits

Another option for stranded straphangers may be Chariot, a car service that launched its third route in New York City today. Going from Williamsburg to Midtown, it is the company's third route in the city since its August rollout — and its first that was crowdsourced by customers.

Chariot works like a rideshare, in which its app will let you know how close one of the commuter vans is and allows you to reserve a seat. Then you just go to one of the designated stops and hop on for \$4 a ride or \$119 for a monthly pass.

“We don't disclose exact numbers, but we've been growing week-over-week,” Marketing Manager Brittany Lewis said, adding that “multiple” new routes are expected by yearend.

While Chariot is not actively planning to pick up the slack during the L train shutdown, “we are open to whatever residents want,” Lewis said. “So if that time comes and that's something people are looking for, we'll definitely want to help them.”

New Yorkers can “found” a Chariot route by going to Chariot.com/routes.

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Jewish Facilities In Queens Get Federal Funds To Improve Security

By Gina Martinez

[Times Ledger](#), October 10, 2017

U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-Flushing) has announced Jewish facilities in Queens will be getting \$450,000 in federal funds to improve security.

The funding is coming after a citywide increase in threats and attacks against Jewish schools, synagogues and organizations.

Breast Cancer - NYCHHealth - MetroPlus

The funds are being allocated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides non-profit organizations with funding for security enhancements, Meng said.

For non-profits to qualify for NSGP funds they must face a high risk of a terrorist attack. The six facilities receiving the \$75,000 in funding include the Jewish Institute of Queens, in Elmhurst; Bais Yaakov Academy of Queens, in Kew Gardens; Beth Gavriel Bukharian Congregation, in Forest Hills; Central Queens YM & YWHA, in Forest Hills; Queens Yeshiva Ketana, in Fresh Meadows; and the Temple Gates of Prayer, in Flushing.

“With anti-Semitic incidents on the rise, it is critical that Jewish institutions have appropriate resources to protect their properties, and this funding will go a long way towards helping these Queens facilities guard against threats and attacks,” Meng said. “The safety and security of students, organization members and congregation members must be the top priority of any school, organization or synagogue. I am pleased that our borough is receiving its fair share of these critical and very competitive federal grants.”

According to the congresswoman, funding from the grants can go towards physical barriers, gates, safety gear, surveillance equipment and other security measures. Meng, who serves on the House Appropriations Committee, helped secure an increase in funding for the NSGP initiative, doubling the amount from \$25 million in 2017 to \$50 million for 2018.

In April, the NYPD announced there was a 55 percent spike in hate crimes in the city compared to that time last year. NYPD officials attributed the jump to a 94 percent rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes in particular. The 107th Precinct increased security during Passover in synagogues in Fresh Meadows. Since the beginning of 2017, at least 91 Jewish organizations across the country, including schools and Jewish community centers, have been the target of 116 bomb threats, 15 of which were made against Jewish locations in New York state.

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OTHER NEW JERSEY NEWS

Surviving Sandy Author Speaks Oct. 20 at NJ Maritime Museum Program

[The SandPaper](#), October 9, 2017

The New Jersey Maritime Museum's first post-season presentation will be given on Friday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. at Buckalew's Restaurant and Tavern in Beach Haven. Admission is free, but donations to the museum are accepted.

Guest speaker Scott Mazzella will discuss his book, *Surviving Sandy – Long Beach Island and the Greatest Storm of the Jersey Shore*, as well as how the superstorm still affects the area five years later.

Mazzella's talk will include his concept for writing the book, gathering stories from storm survivors, and displaying and describing their experiences through a collection of more than 250 photographs. He said he would show how Sandy tracked from its origin in the Atlantic, initially becoming a hurricane but then morphing into a superstorm as it moved north but then veered west with a bull's eye pointed at the Jersey Shore.

"There was a high-pressure system to our north and a deepening trough to the west, which pulled Sandy perpendicular to us," said Mazzella, a history teacher at the Jonas Salk Middle School in Old Bridge. "While it caused a lot of damage to LBI, it was quite worse farther up the shore and areas of Staten Island and Queens in New York. That's what made it an historic storm."

He said one of the legacies of Sandy is how it revolutionized storm warnings through Facebook and other social media outlets.

"People are better prepared today in the event of a major storm," said Mazzella. "I think Sandy woke a lot of people up who didn't think the Jersey Shore would ever be impacted by a hurricane."

He said he would also look at this year's hurricane season, which brought very destructive storms through hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Jose.

“They were making landfall one after another,” he said. “This has been a most unusual hurricane season.”

For reservations or additional information, call the museum at 609-492-0202.

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HURRICANE SEASON

Nate Remnants Drench Northeast; Most Power Back On In South

[Associated Press](#), October 9, 2017

BILOXI, Miss. (AP) — Remnants of Hurricane Nate buffeted the U.S. Northeast with wind and rain Monday while power crews restored most electrical service on the Gulf Coast and an overdue cruise ship delayed by the storm finally headed into port.

With the center of the tropical depression located near the eastern shore of Lake Erie, forecasters said parts of Pennsylvania and New York could receive 2 inches (5 centimeters) of rain or more. Police in Amherst, New York, shared photos of water covering some roads.

Meanwhile, in the Southeast, utilities said crews had restored electrical service to all but a few thousand of the more than 100,000 homes and businesses that lost power because of Nate in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida.

Stuck in the Gulf of Mexico for two days because of Nate, the Carnival Fantasy began moving toward its berth after the Coast Guard reopened the port of Mobile, Alabama. The ship originally was supposed to dock on Saturday after a five-day trip; it was due in at 4 p.m. Monday.

Some passengers complained about the unscheduled delay on social media, but Carnival spokeswoman Christine De La Huerta said the ship had plenty of provisions and would return when able.

The ship has a total guest capacity of 2,056 people and carries a crew of 920.

Dramatic scene as storm surge floods Biloxi casino car park

At Dauphin Island, Alabama, Mayor Jeff Collier said workers were using heavy equipment to remove as much as 6 feet (1.8 meters) of sand that washed across a more than 3-mile (4.8-kilometer) stretch of the island’s main road and more than 20 side streets.

“It moved the beachfront on to the roadway,” said Collier. Also on the Alabama coast, workers were fixing a more than 1,500-foot-long (457-meter-long) fishing pier that was damaged by Nate.

Mississippi’s worst damage was in coastal Jackson County, where Emergency Manager Earl Etheridge said officials have received reports of about 200 damaged buildings. Some had flooding from storm surge, he said, but most had roof damage from high winds.

County and state officials also are investigating barrels and large containers that washed ashore and may be holding hazardous chemicals, he said.

Ruth Adams, a Massachusetts native riding out her first hurricane in her beach house in Jackson County near Ocean Springs, said Nate stripped off her metal roof.

“The one thing I have learned is, I don’t intend to stay even for a Category 1,” said Adams, whose house on a narrow strip of land was cut off by rising waters.

No storm-related deaths or injuries were immediately reported in the United States, but Nate left at least 22 people dead in Central America.

The Hurricane Center said a depression in the open Atlantic had strengthened into Tropical Storm Ophelia on Monday, but the system didn't pose any threat to land.

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Brock Long On FEMA's Response To Hurricane Nate (VIDEO)

[Fox News](#), October 8, 2017

Oct. 08, 2017 – 3:21 – FEMA administration provides insight on 'Fox & Friends' about latest relief efforts.

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FEMA Chief Says Hurricanes This Year Have Already “Strained” Resources

[Associated Press](#), October 8, 2017

NEW ORLEANS —

The head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency said the hurricanes that have struck the U.S. and its territories this year — four so far — have “strained” resources.

FEMA Administrator Brock Long told ABC's “This Week” that some 85 percent of the agency's forces were deployed and still working on issues created by hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria and now Nate.

He said that “in regards to resources, of course we're strained” because “nearly 85 percent of my entire agency is deployed right now. We're still working massive issues in Harvey, Irma, as well as the issues in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and now this one.”

Nate struck the U.S. as a Category 1 storm on Saturday but has since weakened substantially. The National Hurricane Center in Miami downgraded the storm to “tropical depression” strength and discontinued all hurricane and storm surge warnings and watches for the Gulf Coast.

Winds gusts of tropical storm force were expected over the Florida Panhandle and portions of Alabama and Georgia on Sunday, the hurricane center said. Water levels remained elevated along portions of the northern Gulf Coast, but were expected to gradually subside by midday Sunday.

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INSURANCE and LEGAL

FEMA Flood Map Changes Subject Of Next Environmental Lecture At Ocean City Library

By Anthony Bellano

[Patch.com](#), October 9, 2017

OCEAN CITY, NJ — Ocean City residents can learn about the new FEMA flood insurance rate maps and what impact the changes have on their property during a free lecture at the Ocean City Free Public Library on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 6:30 p.m.

Ocean City Chief Financial Officer and Emergency Management Coordinator Frank Donato will lead the discussion, and will also talk about what steps residents should take to make sure they are prepared for storm events.

The lecture, which is part of the Environmental Lecture Series sponsored by the Ocean City Environmental Commission in partnership with the library, will be held in the Chris Maloney Lecture Hall. For more information, call 609-399-2434, ext. 5222.

Ocean City Council recently approved a proposed ordinance to adopt the updates to the maps, which were from 1984. Since they were initially issued, FEMA has released updated advisory maps that apply to new construction and substantially renovated homes in Ocean City. Officials say the change won't have a substantial impact on insurance premiums.

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In Aftermath Of Hurricanes, FEMA's Slow Flood Mapping Leaves Homeowners Vulnerable

By Alison Spann

[The Hill](#), October 9, 2017

The government's disaster preparedness agency has failed to map flood risks in U.S. communities in a timely manner, leaving many vulnerable homeowners with a false security that they don't need flood insurance, the Homeland Security Department's internal watchdog warns.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has delayed decisions on flood zone determinations — in some cases by two years or more — and currently has more than 240 mapping projects on hold, the department's inspector general warned in a report dated Sept. 27.

As a result, only 42 percent of FEMA's flood risk database is currently up to date, meaning more than half of the country's flood map miles need to be revised, the review found. The agency's stated goal is to have 80 percent of its flood maps current.

“Without accurate floodplain identification and mapping processes, management, and oversight, FEMA cannot provide members of the public with a reliable rendering of their true flood vulnerability or ensure that [National Flood Insurance Program] rates reflect the real risk of flooding,” the report said.

The findings suggest that many people across the country may not understand the risks that their homes face from flooding, a fact underlined by the series of hurricanes that have hit the United States this season.

Hurricane Harvey's devastation in Texas in late August provides a cogent example.

The University of California, Davis Center for Watershed Sciences said its analysis of flood data after Harvey found that the majority of the flooded areas in Houston's Harris County were outside FEMA's declared risk areas.

“Over 50% of estimated inundation occurred outside of any mapped flood zone,” it reported last month.

Mapping data released by FEMA shows that at least a third of structures initially reported damaged by flooding as of Sept. 2 were outside declared flood zones. Some members of Texas's congressional delegation estimate as many as 85 percent of victims in the state were without flood insurance when the epic storm hit.

"The recent flooding in Texas after Hurricane Harvey serves as a devastating example of the importance of accurate and reliable flood maps," Inspector General John Roth said. "We are optimistic that our recommended changes will improve FEMA's management of the flood mapping program and introduce internal controls to ensure the quality of the maps produced by FEMA's partners."

FEMA flood maps are used by the government and insurance companies to evaluate flood risk and calculate insurance premiums or insurance eligibility.

The agency says it knows it must do better but that Harvey's damage in Texas must be evaluated with the reality that the storm's magnitude was historic.

"The recent storms, which in many cases exceeded FEMA's data-backed assessments of the areas that have a 1-in-100 risk of flooding in any given year, were strong evidence of the fact that anywhere it can rain, it can flood," the agency said in a statement.

That's little solace, however, to homeowners without the insurance now to cover their losses or the lawmakers that represent them in Congress.

"I think I saw 85 percent of the folks did not have flood insurance. A lot of them, as you said, were told they were not in a flood area," Rep. Roger Williams (R-Texas) told The Hill. "A 100-year floodplain is what everybody deals with. This appears to be a 500-year, so these are going to be issues that are going to have to be sorted out."

Asked what may need to be done, Williams answered: "Eventually we're going to have to remap and redo these kinds of things so this doesn't happen again."

But before that new effort begins, FEMA has to still catch up and update a mapping system that it admits suffered from inadequacies.

The agency says it is strongly committed to giving the public good risk data and that it has "made significant progress developing and implementing several flood-related policy and program changes."

It agreed with recommendations listed by the inspector general, which include adopting policies that would ensure mapping projects move forward on a timely basis.

Until those problems are fixed, flood-vulnerable homeowners may be left in the dark, a reality that has members of Congress scrambling for long-term solutions.

"There are a lot of legal issues that are going to come up," said Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Texas). "So we have been working with the state and the locals but it has been, as you know, it's not something that is going to be done overnight. It's going to take a while."

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SPANISH

FEMA Ha Desembolsado \$27.4 Millones A Los Damnificados

[El Nuevo Día \(PRI\)](#), October 6, 2017

El director para Puerto Rico y el Caribe de la Agencia federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (Fema, por sus siglas en inglés), Alejandro de La Campa, dijo hoy que su agencia le da "un adelanto inicial" -que puede ser de \$500- a las personas afectadas por el huracán María que solicitan ayuda y son elegibles.

“Eso es parte del proceso nuestro de asistencia donde las personas solicitan y a base de lo catastrófico que ha sido este evento, estamos proveyendo ayuda. Pero tienen que ser personas que hayan sufrido daños en sus hogares”, precisó el funcionario federal.

“Tenemos distintas cantidades que se van a estar dando a las familias dependiendo de los daños. Incluso, de las primeras ayudas que nosotros damos es para que puedan alquilar un lugar”, abundó.

Otra de las ayudas que proveen es la repartición de toldos livianos. De esos, Fema ha entregado más de 10,000. Estos toldos no son los que instala el Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los Estados Unidos en residencias que hayan perdido sus techos. Ese proceso de instalación, comenzó ayer, según se informó.

Los \$500 que provee Fema solo es para familias elegibles que soliciten ayuda y que hayan tenido daños a consecuencia del huracán, reiteró De La Campa. Esa ayuda inicial es provista por Fema antes de que un inspector acuda a la residencia a revisar los daños.

Al momento, Fema ha recibido 203,111 solicitudes y ha desembolsado \$27.4 millones como parte del programa de asistencia pública (a los municipios).

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Precisa FEMA La Forma De Inscribirse Para Solicitar Asistencia Por Desastre

[El Vocero de Puerto Rico](#), October 7, 2017

La Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA) sugirió hoy los procedimientos que deben seguir los ciudadanos que han sufrido daños o pérdidas materiales causados directamente por el huracán María.

La entidad federal sugirió que se puede solicitar asistencia por desastre, incluso si tiene un seguro, pues es posible que haya ayuda disponible para los daños no asegurados o con seguro insuficiente y si las reclamaciones no se liquidan rápidamente.

Hasta la fecha, indicó FEMA, se han inscrito más de 280,000 sobrevivientes del desastre para solicitar asistencia.

La asistencia federal para dueños de viviendas e inquilinos puede incluir subvenciones para alquiler, vivienda temporal, reparaciones a la vivienda en residencias primarias, así como otras necesidades relacionadas con el desastre.

La ayuda que FEMA proporciona es para las necesidades básicas de los sobrevivientes y es el primer paso para la recuperación relacionada con el huracán María, que golpeó a Puerto Rico el pasado 20 de septiembre.

La Agencia Federal para el Desarrollo de la Pequeña Empresa (SBA, siglas en inglés) también ofrece préstamos con intereses bajos por las pérdidas para bienes personales, propiedades inmuebles y negocios.

Para comenzar el proceso de la solicitud se sugiere tener a su disposición:

- * Su dirección con código postal
- * Instrucciones de cómo llegar a su propiedad
- * Condición de su casa dañada
- * Información sobre seguros, si la tiene disponible
- * Número del Seguro Social
- * Número de teléfono al que se le pueda contactar
- * Dirección donde puede recibir correo

* Depósito Directo:

Los fondos de asistencia en desastres se pueden enviar directamente a su cuenta bancaria, por lo que es importante que se proporcione el tipo de cuenta bancaria, número de cuenta y número de ruta bancaria

Manténgase en contacto con FEMA:

* Después de inscribirse, se le dará un número de inscripción de FEMA

* Asegúrese de escribir su número y guardarlo

* Necesitará el número siempre que se ponga en contacto con FEMA

Una vez completado el proceso de inscripción, recibirá una llamada de FEMA para dar seguimiento. Un inspector programará una cita para visitar su hogar. Los inspectores contratados por FEMA no requerirán información de la cuenta bancaria.

La misión de FEMA es apoyar a los ciudadanos y a las agencias de primera respuesta para garantizar que trabajen juntos para desarrollar, mantener y mejorar la capacidad de prepararse.

La asistencia de recuperación por desastre está disponible sin distinción de raza, color, religión, nacionalidad, sexo, edad, discapacidad, conocimiento de inglés o situación económica.

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Tras Retirar Los Datos De Su Web, FEMA Vuelve A Dar Estadísticas Sobre El Acceso A Agua Potable Y Electricidad En Puerto Rico

By Alejandra Vargas Morera

[Univision](#), October 6, 2017

Estos dos datos fundamentales desaparecieron de la página que documenta la respuesta de la agencia federal del manejo de emergencias en la isla. Sin explicación y tras el reporte que en principio publicó The Washington Post, este viernes volvieron a colocar esa información.

La falta de agua potable y electricidad en Puerto Rico tras el paso devastador del huracán María han puesto a la isla en una situación de crisis humanitaria. A las críticas de las autoridades locales sobre la lentitud en la ayuda, marcada la polémica entre la alcaldesa de San Juan y el presidente Donald Trump, podría sumarse otra más: la falta de transparencia.

El diario The Washington Post fue el primero en reportar que los datos de acceso a agua potable y electricidad fueron eliminados de la página web de la Agencia de Gestión para Emergencias (FEMA) que reúne los avances de la respuesta federal a la emergencia. Hasta el miércoles la mitad de los 3.6 millones de habitantes de Puerto Rico no tenía agua potable y tan sólo un 5% había recuperado la electricidad, más de dos semanas después del paso del huracán que dañó por completo la red eléctrica. Para el jueves, los datos ya no estaban allí. Luego del reporte, sin embargo, este viernes por la tarde el portal de la agencia volvió a tener los datos sobre agua y electricidad.

Un portavoz de FEMA, William Booher, indicó al periódico que esa información está recogida en otra página web oficial de la oficina del gobernador de Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, pero no explicó por qué habían dejado de incluirse en el reporte general de la ayuda federal.

“Nuestra misión es apoyar al gobernador y sus prioridades de respuesta a través de la estructura de mando unificada para ayudar a los puertorriqueños a recuperarse y volver a la rutina”, indicó al diario Booher, que defendió que en cualquier caso los datos están disponibles y abiertos al público en la otra web.

Los datos que sí se mantienen allí son los de los trabajos que están llevando a cabo el gobierno.

Según FEMA, actualmente hay 14,000 empleados federales en Puerto Rico y las Islas Vírgenes, todos los aeropuertos y oficinas de correo federales están abiertos, han limpiado más de 30 millas de carretera. Además, el 65% de las tiendas de comestibles han reabierto y casi todos los hospitales y centros de diálisis, agregan.

El presidente Trump, que visitó la isla el martes, ha asegurado que el trabajo federal ha sido “increíble” y “exitoso”, mientras la alcaldesa de San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz, se ha convertido en el símbolo del enfado de Puerto Rico.

Ambos se enzarzaron en una disputa dialéctica después de que Cruz suplicara ayuda ante los problemas para distribuir la ayuda sobre el terreno y, después de diez días sin energía eléctrica, denunciara: “Estamos muriendo y nos están matando con su ineficiencia y burocracia”.

“Quieren que les resuelvan todo, cuando debería ser un esfuerzo de la comunidad. Los trabajadores federales presentes en la isla están haciendo un excelente trabajo”, contestó Trump, quien durante su visita dijo que Puerto Rico debería estar orgulloso de que solo murieran 16 personas, a diferencia de la “catástrofe real” de Katrina, que dejó un saldo de 1,800 muertos. Poco después de las palabras del mandatario, el gobernador Roselló anunciaba que el balance de muertos aumentaba a 34.

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Sin Luz Y Sin Agua: Así Es La Vida Cotidiana De Los Puertorriqueños Dos Semanas Después Del Huracán María

By Patricia Clarembaux

[Univision](#), October 6, 2017

PUERTO RICO.- Las rutinas de los puertorriqueños están trastocadas desde que el huracán María devastó todo cuanto pudo en esta isla hace dos semanas. La falta de agua y luz –o de al menos de uno de ellos– les ha reducido las comidas, los ha llevado a bañarse en casas de familiares e incluso mantiene negocios cerrados. Y en algunos casos no tenerlos es el menor de los problemas: hay viviendas que quedaron destruidas.

Poco a poco Puerto Rico intenta volver a su ritmo. Ya muchos han regresado al trabajo, pero igual deben lidiar con lo esencial, buscan incansablemente agua, comida –la que haya– y diésel, para mantener las plantas encendidas y al menos librarse de los 90 grados de temperatura al prender el aire acondicionado.

Las kilométricas filas de las gasolineras han bajado, es cierto. Pero en las calles se mantienen las líneas de personas esperando a la entrada de manantiales naturales a la orilla de cualquier carretera para llenar una, dos, o cuantas botellas de agua puedan para hidratarse y bañarse.

Según la Autoridad Eléctrica de Luz, apenas 9% de la isla tiene electricidad en su casa. Y a 54,6% le llegó el agua, reportó Acueducto. Para el miércoles, las estadísticas de la agencia federal para el manejo de desastres (FEMA) mostraban que solo el 5% de los residentes tenía luz y la mitad de la población había recuperado el acceso a agua potable. Los datos habían sido retirados el jueves de la página web, pero este viernes luego de que medios informaran que las estadísticas ya no estaban, el portal de la agencia volvió a incluir la información.