

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 7th, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman of House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

We write to request that any additional emergency supplemental funding legislation for Hurricanes Irma and Maria considered by the House include \$1.1 billion in international disaster relief, recovery and reconstruction assistance for our affected Caribbean neighbors, particularly the islands of Dominica and Barbuda.

As you know, Hurricanes Harvey, Jose, Irma and Maria have ravaged our mainland, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and our friends and neighbors in the Caribbean. Sadly, our friends in the Caribbean were not included in any funding request sent by the President to Congress. Given our proximity and the crucial economic and security partnerships we maintain with our Caribbean neighbors, we think it is imperative to prioritize funding for those countries that were devastated by these storms. As you may know, more than two months after Hurricanes Irma and Maria tore through the Caribbean, citizens of these islands are still having trouble receiving access to basic goods and services. Insufficient quantities of food and supplies, lack of power and communication, extremely long fuel lines, and lack of communication and cell phone coverage have left the islands destroyed.

Thousands have been affected by these hurricanes and the widespread devastation, especially with regard to housing and infrastructure, is unparalleled. According to a recent CARICOM report, Hurricane Irma left 169,000 people and 75,000 buildings exposed to a deadly wind speed that resulted in 134 deaths. Days later, Hurricane Maria left at least 97 people dead and even more devastation. Hurricane Maria is considered to be the worst natural disaster on record in Dominica, where 90% of the structures on the island have been damaged and 100% of the agriculture industry has been destroyed.

We also know that many people in the Caribbean Community, who often rely on tourism for their main source of income, have not been able to reopen their businesses and individuals have not been able to return to work. In fact, in Dominica, the British Virgin Islands, and Antigua and Barbuda, total damages

and losses to tourism and the economies amount to more than \$2.7 billion. In the British Virgin Islands alone, 95% of all coastal small properties on the island of Tortola are destroyed or severely damaged. We understand that the recovery and rebuilding of the islands will be a long and arduous process, and that is why we must continue to work together to ensure that the families and communities impacted by these devastating storms receive the short and long-term humanitarian aid they need.

As we continue to provide funding to rebuild from Hurricanes Irma, Maria and Harvey here at home, we cannot forget our neighbors in the Caribbean who also suffered a devastating and catastrophic hit from these storms. Given the enormity of the challenges ahead and the current humanitarian crisis, the Caribbean will require the coordinated and sustained financial commitment of the United States. For this reason, we urge you to include \$1.1 billion in a supplemental appropriations package that will aid the short-to long-term relief, recovery, and reconstruction of these islands. The United States has an obligation to work with our Caribbean neighbors to restore infrastructure, provide critical relief funding, and help foster reconstruction on the islands.

In the wake of these historic storms, we cannot forget the Caribbean. We look forward to working with you to promote a long-term agenda that empowers our friends in the Caribbean to rebuild their lives and their countries.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



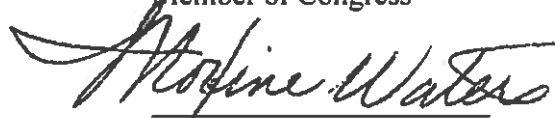
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress