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April 18, 2018

William B. Long
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20024-2523

Re: Extension of FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program for Hurricane Victims

Dear Administrator Long:

It is with great urgency that we correspond with you to ask that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) extend the Federal Transitional Shelter Program (TSP) past its projected termination for the victims of Hurricane Maria. A wide range of issues impacting the recovery and rebuilding of Puerto Rico has created an exodus from the island to the mainland and a search for safe and affordable market not easily met by the housing market in the communities where they reside.

With thousands of Hurricane Maria victims still residing in hotels and unable to return to their homes in the Caribbean and with another hurricane season 6 weeks away, the need for FEMA to maintain a level of safety and security for these families and their children should be of the highest priority.

Notices by FEMA to end TPS later this month are unacceptable. They are an embarrassment to your agency if carried out and displaced families are evicted from temporary shelters.

The families receiving such notices are being traumatized by this situation and need a swift resolution to this problem that fully considers the extent of their circumstances and degree of the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria on their yet-to-recover communities in the Caribbean.

Currently, the uncertainty surround the extension of the TSP is making the lives of those in emergency housing more stressful, raising anxiety levels and negatively impacting the mental health of the children and families impacted.

We ask that FEMA not wait till the midnight hour to decide to extend TPS. FEMA should consider the logistic realities faced in the rebuilding efforts in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, the obstacles of finding safe, decent and affordable housing on the mainland, and the hardships of finding a job in a new community by the majority of TPS enrollees.

The wealthiest nation in the history of humanity can do better to help the victims of such natural disasters. With more such devastating acts of nature in our near, this current situation should serve to strengthen FEMA's connection to the communities they serve and build trust in our government agencies and officials.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Guillermo A. Martinez
Legislative Director

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Albany, New York 12248
518-455-5514
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Sincerely,



Hon. Marcos A. Crespo



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