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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5400

September 22, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

The following letter is to provide you with an initial assessment of our current needs related to transportation and kindly request your assistance as Puerto Rico embarks on recovering from the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

As you are probably aware, Hurricane Maria, a category 4 hurricane, made landfall on Wednesday, September 20, 2017, leaving behind great devastation. My constituents are currently without power and are facing difficulties acquiring emergency supplies, including but not limited to food, water, diesel, gasoline and medication. As assistance continues to reach the island, a new concern emerges related to transportation of goods and services throughout the 78 municipalities considering the poor condition of our roads and bridges in the wake of the hurricane. Numerous municipalities experienced severe road damage due to flooding and mudslides, including several that are now impenetrable due to collapsed bridges. As you can imagine, this complicates communication with loved ones and possibly efficiently receiving the help and assistance they desperately need.

Puerto Rico has not seen a hurricane of this magnitude in several generations. The road to recovery will be long and arduous. Assessment efforts are ongoing by local and federal officials and will continue in the coming days as the island comes together to compile information on damages and the help my constituents need.

As Puerto Rico's sole representative in Congress, I urge you to help the Government of Puerto Rico by identifying funds and assistance available through your department for the recovery of federal highways, roads and bridges. They are essential for transporting aid to 3.4 million U.S. citizens and facilitating the island's commercial and financial recovery from this catastrophic event. Please do not hesitate to contact my Congressional Office should you identify any ways in which I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress