

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

August 31, 2020

Mr. Douglas L. Hoelscher
Deputy Assistant to the President and
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Deputy Assistant Hoelscher:

We are writing you in your capacity as Co-Chair of the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status (Task Force), designated by Executive order 13319, to request information about the Task Force's membership at the present time and its work during this Administration. The Committee on Natural Resources is the lead committee of the House of Representatives on matters related to the territory.

As I am sure you are aware, Executive order 13183, as amended by Executive order 13517, provides that, "It is the policy of the executive branch of the Government of the United States of America to help answer the questions that the people of Puerto Rico have asked for years regarding the options for the islands' future status and the process for realizing an option. Further, it is our policy to consider and develop positions on proposals, without preference among the options, for the Commonwealth's future status; to discuss such proposals with representatives of the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress; to work with leaders of the Commonwealth and the Congress to clarify the options to enable Puerto Ricans to determine their preference among options for the islands' future status that are not incompatible with the Constitution and basic laws and policies of the United States; and to implement such an option if chosen by a majority, including helping Puerto Ricans obtain a governing arrangement under which they would vote for national government officials, if they choose such a status. It is also the policy of the executive branch to improve the treatment of Puerto Rico in Federal programs and to promote job creation, education, health care, clean energy, and economic development on the islands."

The orders also direct the Task Force to implement this policy and "ensure official attention to and facilitate action on matters related to proposals for Puerto Rico's status and provide advice and recommendations on such matters to the President and the Congress." Further, the Task Force is required to "identify and promote existing Federal initiatives that benefit Puerto Rico; provide advice and recommendations to the President and the Congress on the treatment of Puerto Rico in Federal programs; and provide advice and recommendations to the President and the Congress on policies and initiatives that promote job creation, education, health care, clean energy, and economic development on the islands."

We are not aware of the identity of the other Members of the Task Force at the present time or its work during this Administration, including its required recommendations to Congress during the past three and two-thirds years. As the Committee prepares to conduct hearings on Puerto Rico's future political status and proposals for economic development on the territory, the Congress – and our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico, however, should have the benefit of the Task Force's views and proposals. This will assist the Committee with its oversight and legislative responsibilities.

We, therefore, request that 1) you provide the Committee with the names and positions of the other Members of the Task Force, over the course of the next week, and 2) the Task Force, by September 18, report to the Committee on its work as required by the Executive orders, outline its required recommendations to Congress and list its meetings during the past three and two-thirds years.

The Committee will be informed by the requested information and looks forward to its receipt. Please contact Margarita Varela-Rosa with the Committee's Office of Insular Affairs at Margarita.Varela-Rosa@mail.house.gov or (202) 748-2828 if you have any questions about this request.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Sincerely,

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources

JOSÉ E. SERRANO
Member of Congress

JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA
Member of Congress

NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ
Member of Congress

DARREN SOTO
Member of Congress

RUBEN GALLEGO
Member of Congress

LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
Member of Congress



NORMA TORRES
Member of Congress



JOAQUIN CASTRO
Member of Congress



J. LUIS CORREA
Member of Congress