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Executive Office of Public Safety and
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CHARLES D. BAKER
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Lt. Governor

DANIEL BENNETT
Secretary

September 26, 2017

Dear Massachusetts Official,

The Baker-Polito Administration has heard from many of you about assisting the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in the wake of the devastating impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. As you may know, Massachusetts is proud to be home to 300,000 Puerto Ricans, representing one of the largest Puerto Rican-American communities in the country, and we are dedicated to assisting in relief efforts, ranging from financial support to emergency resources.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) remains in constant communication with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is coordinating the deployment of federal resources and support on the ground in Puerto Rico. MEMA has offered nearly a dozen public safety employees to support FEMA in its disaster relief efforts across the country for the ongoing hurricane response (Harvey, Irma, Maria). We are awaiting FEMA's decision as to whether this team will be deployed.

Massachusetts is a member of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), which functions as a national online system available for all states and territories, including Puerto Rico, to facilitate mutual aid and coordinate the provision of certain emergency management assets. MEMA continues to regularly monitor and respond to EMAC requests and is ready, willing, and able to assist if a request is made that the Commonwealth is able to fulfill; indeed, MEMA responded to an EMAC request from Puerto Rico to provide an EMAC support team, but Puerto Rico has confirmed that the capability had been filled by another state.

The Commonwealth is willing and able to deploy a wide array of personnel and equipment at the request of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, including but not limited to:

- Sworn state and local police officers
- National Guard personnel and resources
- Hazardous Materials Technicians

- Environmental Assessment Teams
- Building, road and bridge inspectors
- Incident Management Assistance Teams
- Shelter supplies (cots, blankets, comfort kits) and Support Teams
- Animal Rescue, Veterinarian Teams and Animal Shelter Teams
- Swift and Moving Water Rescue Teams (personnel and boats)
- Heavy equipment (dump trucks, plows, front end loaders, etc.)
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Support Teams
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) A-Team
- Public Assistance Coordinators
- Fire-Based Technical Rescue Teams
- Mobile Command Centers
- Public Safety Communications Support/Restoration Teams
- Public Health Inspectors
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialists
- Coastal Zone Impact Assessment Personnel
- Fire and Fire Code Inspectors
- Saw crews
- Public Information Officers
- Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) staff
- Disaster Mental Health Teams
- Dive Teams

Massachusetts Task Force 1, a FEMA Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team based in Beverly, has also deployed in support of Hurricane Maria.

The Massachusetts National Guard (MANG) is in contact with the National Guard Bureau (NGB) in Washington, D.C. as they work to identify and prioritize military resources needed for response operations in Puerto Rico. Similar to the EMAC program, MANG is willing and able to assist in recovery efforts should federal officials identify and request one of their resources.

While all citizens of Massachusetts are looking for ways to assist the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, our administration has received important information from the National Association of Emergency Managers (NEMA) that works at the federal level to coordinate and oversee emergency response resources. We have been informed that given the extreme logistical challenges on the ground in Puerto Rico, such as damaged infrastructure and reduced capabilities at air strips, officials are not welcoming goodwill gestures at this time, or the donations of goods and commodities outside the EMAC system that do not meet Puerto Rico's specific requests. All airstrips are currently being used to receive critical life-saving resources such as rescue personnel and urgent medical supplies.

However, Governor Ricardo Rosselló's office has contacted governors across the nation to inform states that support for recovery and reconstruction can be directed to a 501(c)(3) organization led by First Lady of Puerto Rico Beatriz Rosselló, United for Puerto Rico: Together Changing Paths

- You can help support the recovery & reconstruction of Puerto Rico by directing donations to United for Puerto Rico, at <http://unitedforpuertorico.com>.
- The Red Cross is also deeply involved in Puerto Rico's relief operations and can be visited at <http://www.redcross.org>
- Other disaster relief organizations can be found through the website of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD): <https://www.nvoad.org/current-disasters/werespond/>. The National VOAD asks people not to send or bring unsolicited donated items.

For those still trying to connect with family and friends in Puerto Rico, please visit the Red Cross' "Safe and Well" website: <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/> or contact the Red Cross's reunification program by calling 1-800-REDCROSS OR 1-800-733-2767.

Members of the Baker-Polito Administration have been in contact with Governor Rosselló's office and will continue to make the Commonwealth's resources available as recovery efforts continue. The administration has also posted information on the [state's website](#) informing citizens of other helpful resources that are contributing to relief efforts

By all accounts, the recovery and rebuilding process for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will be a long sustained effort over time to support every individual impacted by these devastating hurricanes. Please know the Commonwealth of Massachusetts stands ready to assist in any way possible, and that our thoughts and prayers remain with the people of Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican community of Massachusetts, and all the people affected by this horrible storm.

Sincerely,



Daniel Bennett
Secretary of Public Safety and Security