

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 27, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
The U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Perdue and Director Mulvaney:

We are writing concerning the release of emergency nutrition assistance funds to Puerto Rico to supplement the Nutrition Assistance Program. We would like to know the exact status of these funds, including details regarding why funds have not yet been released to Puerto Rico.

The President signed the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act into law on June 6, 2019. Congress passed this legislation to provide emergency relief to hundreds of thousands of American citizens. Congress specifically included \$600 million for disaster nutrition assistance, with the understanding that the funds would be distributed as soon as possible. As we have learned from conversations with federal agencies, and as reported by the Washington Post on June 24, the funds may not be able to be distributed until September.

Puerto Rico has been cutting back nutrition benefits since March, as the people of Puerto Rico continue to recover from the devastation of Hurricanes Maria and Irma. Currently, over 40 percent of Puerto Rican households with children rely on nutrition assistance.

We are requesting information as to why funds that Congress appropriated to respond to an emergency will take three months to reach the people of Puerto Rico.

Specifically, please provide the following information:

- Has the USDA submitted a request to OMB to release the emergency funds? If not, why not?
- Has OMB released the funds to USDA to distribute to Puerto Rico? If not, why not?
- Does the government in Puerto Rico need to submit to USDA a new disaster plan or an amendment to the existing disaster plan?

Due to the time sensitive nature of this request, we look forward to your response no later than July 1, 2019. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

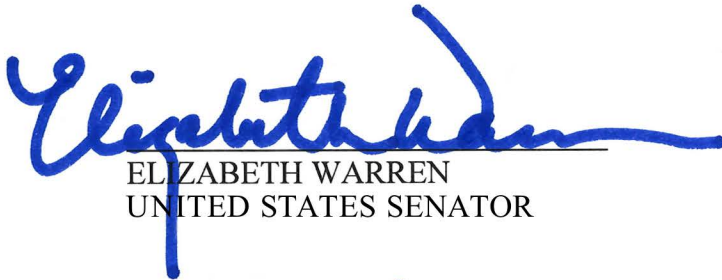
Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS
UNITED STATES SENATOR



CHARLES E. SCHUMER
UNITED STATES SENATOR



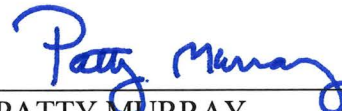
ELIZABETH WARREN
UNITED STATES SENATOR



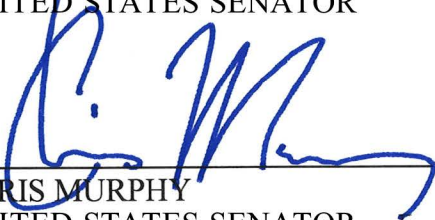
KAMALA D. HARRIS
UNITED STATES SENATOR



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
UNITED STATES SENATOR



PATTY MURRAY
UNITED STATES SENATOR



CHRIS MURPHY
UNITED STATES SENATOR