

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 18, 2017

The Honorable Rick Perry
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Perry and Acting Secretary Duke,

We urge you to leverage the unique expertise and resources at our nation's national laboratories, particularly Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories, in order to help Puerto Rico rebuild and ensure the territory is better positioned to prepare for and recover from future natural disasters. There are a variety of programs under DOE, DHS, and NNSA that can be used to evaluate Puerto Rico's electrical grid needs, develop a more resilient and modern power grid, and examine its other critical infrastructure for better disaster planning. These three programs that involve our nation's national laboratories along with a wide range of other partners can serve as a foundation for expanding assistance to the people of Puerto Rico:

DOE Grid Modernization Laboratory Consortium (GMLC)

This DOE program has funded a range of disaster resilience projects to help resolve a variety of electrical grid issues, including a project to assist New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and another to mitigate natural disaster vulnerabilities from tsunamis, earthquakes, and severe storms in Alaska. The consortium's participating national laboratories, which include Sandia and LANL, can work with local stakeholders to identify strategies to help Puerto Rico address grid issues, including making it more resilient to climate threats.

National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC)

Both Sandia and LANL co-manage NISAC, which analyzes the interdependencies, vulnerabilities, and complexities of critical infrastructure to aid federal, state, and local decision-makers through policy assessment, mitigation planning, education, and training. It also assists crisis-response organizations with both preparedness activities and near real-time support during emergencies. DHS can use NISAC to provide invaluable insight on how Puerto Rico can strengthen its critical infrastructure, including transportation, communications, food and fuel, water, and other systems. This will help Puerto Rico with protection, risk mitigation, event response, and event recovery.

Minority Serving Institution Partnership (MSIPP): Consortium for Integrating Energy Systems in Engineering and Science Education

This NNSA administered consortium includes Sandia, the National Energy Technology Laboratory, University of New Mexico, University of Texas at El Paso, and the Universidad del Turabo in Puerto Rico to train the next generation of engineers and scientists to study and ultimately strengthen the grid in Puerto Rico and elsewhere. As climate change continues to threaten our nation's critical electrical infrastructure for years to come, it is important to establish a pipeline for educating young leaders to respond to those challenges.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. The scale of the devastation in Puerto Rico will continue to require a multi-agency, coordinated response. As future threats from severe weather patterns, which are now happening with more frequency and magnitude, increase the likelihood of devastating and destructive storms, we urge you to take advantage of our nation's invaluable national laboratories to respond to these situations in both the short-term and long-term. Please inform us what actions you will take through our nation's national laboratory system to respond to the crisis in Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Representative



Michelle Lujan Grisham
United States Representative