



IndivisibleEB.org

Senator Kamala Harris
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

To: Senator Kamala Harris
From: Indivisible East Bay
Date: June 5, 2018
Subject: Resisting the Trump Agenda (Puerto Rico and Climate Change)

Puerto Rico: First of all, we want Sen. Harris to work to make sure the survivors of the storm get the assistance that they need to recover and rebuild their lives whether that's in Puerto Rico or in other parts of the country. We also want her to work to make sure the Puerto Rican government gets the assistance it needs to make it possible for its citizens to rebuild their lives on the island.

In addition, we want her to push for a deep investigation into what went wrong, not only to hold the administration accountable for a poorly handled crisis which appears to have led to thousands of unnecessary deaths but also to analyze vulnerabilities and failures that exist outside of any one administration's control. We are concerned that there are many more disasters to come and we want to be better prepared to handle the potential fallout. Climate change--that this administration is in deep denial about--will produce more extreme weather events and Puerto Rico's experience is a foreshadowing of what will happen to entire regions of the country. The storm devastated not just homes and livelihoods but also destroyed the electrical grid, transportation infrastructure, and the public health infrastructure.

Some of the top things we'd like to see investigated:

1. What led to such a massive undercount of the mortality rate? (70 times higher than first reported [1])
2. The fragility of the power grid and the underfunded recovery and rebuilding effort has led to long-term damage to public health[2].

Relief Funding: Things still seem really bad. Is Congress going to give them more money for disaster relief?

Rebuilding Resilient Energy Systems Act: Would the senator consider co-sponsoring S.2041 - Rebuilding Resilient Energy Systems Act to reform the Stafford Act[3] to ensure that federal funding for post-disaster infrastructure reconstruction is both greener/more efficient and more resilient?

Long-Term Debt Relief: We want Sen. Harris to advocate for long-term debt relief for Puerto Rico

Climate Change: We believe that putting a price on carbon is one of the most effective tools available to combat climate change. The cost of climate change (the price tags for 2017's natural disasters--both in California and the West in addition to the Gulf region--is unprecedented and will likely increase in following years) is so great that we need to address the driver of climate change in a more direct way.

Questions:

- What does the senator see as the path forward for durable carbon pricing policy? Does she see any hope for a bipartisan solution to climate change?
- What is the senator's position on interim/short-term legislative or funding bills that might preserve research into climate change and its impact? Would she be in favor of pushing for preservation of NOAA's climate modeling and supercomputing (see Exhibit 4a-2 of FY 2019 Budget Request[4] for NOAA) funding?

Sources:

1. Kishore N, Marqués D, Mahmud A, Kiang MV, Rodriguez I, Fuller A, et al. Mortality in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. *N Engl J Med* [Internet]. 2018; Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1056/NEJMsa1803972>
2. Concepción-Acevedo J, Patel A, Luna-Pinto C, Peña RG, Cuevas Ruiz RI, Arbolay HR, et al. Initial Public Health Laboratory Response After Hurricane Maria - Puerto Rico, 2017. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* [Internet]. 2018;67:333–6. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6711a5>
3. Serrano J. Rebuilding Resilient Energy Systems Act of 2017 [Internet]. 4251 Nov 6, 2017. Available from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4251>
4. NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION. NOAA BUDGET ESTIMATES FISCAL YEAR 2019 [Internet]. NOAA; Available from: http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/nbo/fy19_bluebook/FY19-NOAA-CJ.pdf