



May 1, 2019

Dear Members of Congress,

We—the undersigned religious denominations and faith-based organizations—urge you to pass disaster aid legislation that meets the needs of impacted communities across the U.S. and to make public the data to ensure that the recovery reaches all households. Many disaster-impacted communities are in urgent need of assistance now, and it is imperative that they receive assistance as soon as possible.

Faith-based stakeholders and congregations are often directly involved in recovery efforts after a natural disaster. Many religious and community organizations coordinate their efforts with the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons, public agencies, and other partner organizations to ensure that impacted communities have the resources they need to recover. From a broad array of religious affiliations, this effort comes as part of our shared social teachings to care for and serve one another. We believe that all disaster survivors—especially those of us with the lowest incomes and the most severely impacted—should have access to safe, accessible, and affordable housing, nutrition assistance, and other social services during the recovery process.

Disaster assistance funding is critically needed now for states like North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, California, Nebraska, Iowa, Puerto Rico and other territories. As negotiations continue, we hope you can support fully funding disaster relief programs for these regions and ensure the most vulnerable populations have access to those resources. To address equitable long-term recovery, we also ask that any disaster relief bill should also include future housing investments, including support for the National Housing Trust Fund, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and other programs that help extremely low-income households seeking stability at a time of extreme shortage of affordable rental homes in their community.

In particular, we urge you to provide at least \$600 million for Puerto Rico’s Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP), as requested by Governor Ricardo Rosselló. We are pleased to see proposals in both the House and Senate that would include this funding, indicating broad bipartisan support for this urgently-needed assistance. Without immediate action, an estimated 1.35 million

people – one third of Puerto Rico’s populations – will continue to see deep cuts to their nutrition benefits. It is unconscionable for the U.S. government to deny food assistance to families who are struggling to rebuild their lives after devastating natural disasters.

Ensuring an equitable response in recovery efforts is a critical component to our ministries and mission within the faith community. As stakeholders from across the U.S., we ask you to work quickly with your colleagues across the aisle to ensure that struggling communities receive the much needed assistance they desperately need and deserve. We appreciate your service in Congress, and we hope to see a fair disaster supplemental bill reach the President’s desk soon.

Sincerely,

Bread for the World

Church World Service

Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces

Ecumenical Poverty Initiative

Faith Action Network – Washington State

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Islamic Relief USA

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Poligon Education Fund

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

The Episcopal Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries