



**GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO**  
**Ricardo Rosselló Nevares**

November 7, 2017

Secretary Wilbur Ross  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

Puerto Rico recently suffered devastating impacts from Hurricane Maria, resulting in tragic loss of life and widespread impacts to our infrastructure. We are working hard to rebuild, but it will be an arduous task. By this letter, I respectfully request that you declare a federal fishery resource disaster as outlined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1864 and 16 U.S.C. § 1864a, and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, 16 U.S.C. § 4107, as well as clauses to trigger support from the Economic Development Administration. This declaration will provide needed relief for the many businesses and tens of thousands of citizens reliant on our commercial and recreational fishing industries, and is consistent with past and contemporary requests from other areas of the United States.

Although assessments have not been completed due to the substantial damage to our infrastructure and a resultant inability to move around Puerto Rico, it is expected that economic and social impacts will be significant. A conservative valuation of our fisheries economy indicates direct economic effects of \$29 million dockside value from commercial fishing. Regarding recreational fishing, there were over 600,000 recreational angler trips in 2016. These estimates do not include the economic benefits resulting from those initial inputs and how they reverberate throughout the economy.

The impacts to this industry include, but will not be limited, to loss of income resulting from loss and damage to gear and vessels, fishermen displacement, destruction of support facilities such as docks, fish houses, and market facilities, lack of access due to compromised transportation, and direct impact to the coastal ecosystems upon which the fishing economy depends. A comprehensive assessment of the damages and resultant costs will be conducted, but this will take time and we need assistance to get our fishing economy back in working order. We request your assistance in this endeavor, from which citizens throughout the United States will undoubtedly benefit.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ricardo Rosselló Nevares', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ricardo Rosselló Nevares  
Governor