

Five-Minutes Floor Speech
Rep. Pablo José Hernández Rivera (Puerto Rico)
Thursday, May 15, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in March, I stood on this floor and sounded the alarm that Puerto Rico's energy crisis was about to get a lot worse starting in May, due to selective power outages as a result of a lack of generation capacity.

I acknowledged that the government of Puerto Rico had a Plan A: to bring in barges with temporary generation capacity and to repair old generation plants. I offered to support those goals and put my office at the local government's disposition to help accomplish them.

But I also said we needed a Plan B, in case Plan A failed. I proposed three immediate steps:

- To demand transparency from the utility companies about outages.
- To promote energy conservation through education and incentives.
- To provide backup power for the most vulnerable in the island.

Well – here we are.

Last week, the government announced that the generation barges are no longer viable. One of the repaired units failed. And this week, over 100,000 customers lost power in a selective outage announced by LUMA, the utility company, that very same day, leaving them unprepared.

And where is Plan B? It doesn't exist.

Worse yet, the government is walking away from over 300 million dollars in federal appropriated funds for solar panels, and is walking away from a billion-dollar lawsuit against oil companies – a lawsuit that sought to compensate our people for environmental harm.

Yesterday, DHS Secretary Noem did not assure the people of Puerto Rico that the tens of billions of dollars assigned for its reconstruction will be honored.

As I said in March: this administration, both the Puerto Rico administration and federal administration, did not create the energy crisis, but they are responsible if it worsens. They are responsible for fixing it. And right now they are failing.

But I will not stop working.

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This month, I led 14 of my colleagues in urging the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water to increase funding for the Department of Energy to support the resiliency and the modernization of Puerto Rico's grid. I also requested language to expedite delivery of generation assets to the island.

I sincerely hope that the government of Puerto Rico and the government of the United States correct the course. But no matter what, I will keep fighting for the people of Puerto Rico and for its energy future.

And briefly in Spanish, for the benefit of my constituents.

Yo sinceramente espero que los gobiernos de Puerto Rico y Estados Unidos corrijan el curso que llevan en torno la crisis energética que enfrenta la isla. Pero no importa qué, yo seguiré trabajando por el bienestar y el futuro del pueblo de Puerto Rico y la solución a su problema energético.

English translation: *I sincerely hope that the governments of Puerto Rico and the United States correct the course they're on regarding the energy crisis facing the island. But no matter what, I will continue working for the well-being and the future of the people of Puerto Rico, and for a solution to their energy crisis.*

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

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