



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
INDIAN AND INSULAR AFFAIRS  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

August 12, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

I write to express concern regarding recent reports from local municipalities in my district about the closure of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offices in Utuado and Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. These offices play a vital role in supporting local farmers, advancing rural development initiatives, and facilitating access to food assistance programs across the island.

For decades, these offices have been a critical point of access to essential USDA services for hundreds of farmers and their families. They have provided technical assistance, access to financing programs, and crucial recovery support following natural disasters such as hurricanes. Their closure would represent a devastating blow to some of the island's most productive and strategic agricultural regions, threatening to undo years of sustained efforts to strengthen local economies and ensure food security.

On March 27, 2025, I sent a letter to your agency expressing deep concern regarding the potential termination of leases across the country, which all four USDA Rural Development offices in Puerto Rico were deemed mission-critical by your agency.

Given USDA's essential role in Puerto Rico's economic and agricultural development, I respectfully request clarification on the following:

1. Can you confirm whether the USDA offices in Utuado and Mayagüez have been permanently or temporarily closed? What mission area or agency would be affected with these closures?
2. What is the rationale behind these reported closures, and what alternative services are being provided to impacted communities?
3. Does USDA have a list of offices in Puerto Rico that have already been closed or are scheduled for closure in the near future? What mission area or agency was affected by the closure?
4. Were local stakeholders, including municipal governments, farmers, nonprofit partners, and cooperatives, consulted prior to any closure decisions?

5. Are there any USDA offices on the island that remain open but currently do not have on-site staff?

Given the historic challenges that rural communities in Puerto Rico face in accessing federal resources, it is essential that USDA ensure consistent and equitable access to its services. I respectfully request a written response by August 18, 2025, and request a briefing to better understand how USDA plans to continue supporting the communities affected by these changes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Pablo J. Hernández". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pablo" being the most prominent.

Pablo José Hernández  
Member of Congress