



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

September 14, 2026

The Honorable Scott Turner
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW,
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Turner:

I write to express deep concern regarding the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report titled “Puerto Rico Grid Recovery: Limited Progress Toward Stability and Opportunities Exist to Improve Federal Assistance,” which identified that 74% of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds allocated since 2017 for Puerto Rico’s energy grid recovery remain undisbursed.¹ This represents approximately \$1.7 billion in obligated funds for energy grid improvements that has yet to reach the island.

Since 2017, Puerto Rico has faced a persistent energy crisis. Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused the near-total collapse of Puerto Rico’s transmission and distribution system, resulting in one of the longest blackouts in U.S. history and leaving residents in some areas without electricity for nearly a year.² In September 2022, Hurricane Fiona again knocked out the island’s electrical grid for as long as four weeks in certain regions.³ Nearly a decade after Hurricane Maria, the grid remains critically fragile. The island experienced a 33% energy shortfall in 2025, meaning power generation capacity was insufficient to meet a third of peak electricity demand.⁴ Between 2021 and 2024, the average ratepayer experienced 27 hours of outages per year, and in 2024 alone, ratepayers endured more than 73 hours without power.⁵

The prolonged delay in disbursing recovery funds is a significant contributing factor to this persistent crisis. The GAO report identifies several barriers impeding progress, including staff turnover and hiring freezes that have delayed project reviews, the complexity of project funding, the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority’s financial condition, and uncertainty around entities

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Puerto Rico Grid Recovery: Limited Progress Toward Stability and Opportunities Exist to Improve Federal Assistance*, GAO-26-107772 (Washington, DC, 2026), accessed July 2, 12, 2026, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-26-107772>.

² “Puerto Rico | Department of Energy,” U.S. Department of Energy, <https://www.energy.gov/oe/puerto-rico>.

³ “Puerto Rico | Department of Energy,” U.S. Department of Energy.

⁴ David Blackmon, “Puerto Rico’s Electric Grid Still in Crisis 9 Years after Maria,” *Forbes*, February 12, 2026, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidblackmon/2026/02/12/puerto-ricos-electric-grid-still-in-crisis-9-years-after-maria/>.

⁵ David Blackmon, “Puerto Rico’s Electric Grid Still in Crisis 9 Years after Maria.”

involved in the recovery.⁶ The continued failure to deploy these funds poses an unacceptable risk to Puerto Rico's 3.2 million residents.

Accordingly, I request responses to the following questions no later than September 25, 2026.

1. What specific steps is HUD taking to accelerate the disbursement of the remaining \$1.7 billion in energy grid recovery funds allocated to Puerto Rico?
2. What is HUD's projected timeline for full disbursement?
3. What corrective action plan, if any, has HUD developed in response to the GAO report's findings, and what is the timeline for its implementation?
4. How does HUD ensure that funds already obligated but undisbursed are protected from rescission or reprogramming?

Respectfully,



Pablo José Hernández
Member of Congress

⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Puerto Rico Grid Recovery*, 36.