

Durbin, Duckworth Join Lawmakers In Bicameral Push For President Biden To Issue A Major Disaster Declaration For Puerto Rico

by Senator Duckworth, Durbin Offices
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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez (D-NY-07) in a [bicameral](#) letter to President Joe Biden urging him to issue a

Major Disaster Declaration for all of Puerto Rico’s municipalities in response to Hurricane Fiona. Just days before the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Maria, the deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history, Hurricane Fiona ravaged the island with catastrophic flash flooding, unprecedented rainfall, and high-speed winds.

“Governor Pierluisi has formally requested a Major Disaster Declaration for all of Puerto Rico’s municipalities in response to Hurricane Fiona. We strongly urge you to approve this request to ensure Puerto Rico has all the federal resources available to respond to this disaster,” wrote the bicameral group of lawmakers to President Biden.

“Furthermore, 750,000 homes remain without potable water. Bridges have collapsed, roads are blocked with debris, and schools are damaged,” the lawmakers added. “FEMA Public Assistance is urgently needed to begin restoring this vital infrastructure.”

In 2017, thousands of lives were lost in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria due to the Trump Administration’s botched response. In 2020, following Hurricane Maria, the island faced destructive earthquakes, requiring more disaster recovery resources. The lawmakers also highlighted how institutions in charge of the electric grid have failed to repair the electrical system, resulting in continued frequent and widespread power outages.

“These events have left Puerto Rico’s critical infrastructure vulnerable to extreme weather. We urge you to help the people of Puerto Rico equitably recover from these multiple disasters and access the federal funding they urgently need,” concluded the lawmakers.

Joining Durbin, Duckworth, Menendez, and Velázquez in signing the letter were Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Richard Blumenthal, (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Ed Markey (D-MA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bob Casey (D-PA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), and Jeff Merkley (D-OR).

The letter was also signed by U.S. Representatives Adriano Espaillat (D-NY-13), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY-14), Bennie Thompson (D-MS-02), Val Demings (D-FL-10), Darren Soto (D-FL-09), Alma Adams (D-NC-12), Pete Aguilar (D-CA-31), Ruben Gallego (D-AZ-07), Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon (R-PR), Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA-06), Al Green (D-TX-09), Ritchie Torres (D-NY-15), Jesús “Chuy” García (D-IL-04), and Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ-03).

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).