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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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COMMITTEES:
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JUDICIARY
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July 16, 2010

The Honorable Cecilia Muñoz
Co-Chair, The President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status
Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
The White House
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Director Muñoz: *Cecilia*

I write to follow up on the conversation we had a couple of weeks ago, during which I shared with you my proposal to create and implement a green plan in the island municipality of Vieques, Puerto Rico. Since our conversation, I have spoken with Governor Fortuño and Vieques Mayor Evelyn Delerme. I am pleased to report that both of them share my enthusiasm for this initiative, and have pledged to do whatever they can on the state and local level to advance it. If the Administration and Congress provide the necessary federal support—with the Task Force spearheading this collaborative effort—I am confident that we can transform our vision for Vieques into reality.

Vieques is home to approximately 10,000 full-time residents. A number of factors—ranging from the island's long history as a military training range to its relatively isolated geographic location—have combined to generate particularly challenging economic conditions for the people of Vieques. In the first half of 2010 the unemployment rate in the municipality hovered between 18% and 22%, having reached as high as 27.2% in the fall of 2009. The current jobless rate in Vieques is several percentage points above the unemployment rate for Puerto Rico as a whole, which—at 16.9%—is itself well higher than that of any state.

It is imperative for government officials and concerned citizens—in the states and Puerto Rico—to speak candidly about Vieques' controversial past and to examine the multiple ways in which this past has impacted present-day life on the island. At the same time, we must be forward-looking, constantly striving to improve the *future* for Vieques and its proud people. The idea of a green plan for Vieques is rooted in my deeply-held belief that this beautiful island has enormous untapped potential and that its best days are still to come.

The green plan would include educational programs, recycling and conservation initiatives, renewable energy production projects, mass transportation investments, and incentives for the expanded use of hybrid vehicles. If adequately resourced and thoughtfully executed, the plan would create jobs in various green industries, expand economic opportunities, encourage sustainable development, and otherwise enhance the quality of life in Vieques.

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully recommend that a working group within the Task Force be created to help establish and implement a green plan for Vieques. The working group could be composed of subject-matter experts from the relevant federal agencies, such as the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency. My office—as well as the offices of Governor Fortuño and Mayor Delorme—would collaborate closely with this working group in order to formulate ideas—and then to convert those ideas into action. I look forward to discussing this proposed working group with you further in the coming days.

In closing, I want to thank you for your leadership on the Task Force and, in particular, for always being so helpful to me and attentive to the needs of my constituents.

Sincerely,



Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Luis G. Fortuño, Governor of Puerto Rico
The Honorable Evelyn Delorme, Mayor of Vieques
Brandon Hurlbut, Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Energy
Anthony Babauta, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas, U.S. Department
of the Interior
Tammye Trevino, Administrator of the Rural Housing Service, U.S. Department of
Agriculture
Judith Enck, Region 2 Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency