

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 6, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20230

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
300 7th Street SW
Washington, D.C., 20528

The Honorable Mark Green
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, D.C., 20523

Dear Secretary Pompeo, Acting Secretary McAleenan, and Administrator Green,

As Members of the House Committee on Appropriations who represent a Florida constituency deeply affected by calamities in the Western Hemisphere, we respectfully request that you consider ways to provide much-needed assistance to The Bahamas as expeditiously as possible.

We commend you for efforts already underway to address the dire needs in the Bahamas. We understand that the U.S. Coast Guard, in coordination with USAID, deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) as early as September 3, 2019, to assist with recovery efforts there. Additionally, we have been informed that USAID is airlifting relief commodities such as plastic sheeting, hygiene kits, buckets, water containers, and chainsaws from its emergency warehouse in Miami and that USAID is also providing an initial \$200,000 to The Bahamas Red Cross. These materials are intended to assist approximately 35,000 people in shelters, with water and hygiene kits for an additional 3,000 people. We also are informed that the first relief supplies arrived on September 4, 2019, and that the United States is assisting with search and rescue, recovery efforts, and security in a multi-agency coordinated effort. We understand that USAID has provided more than \$886,000 to date in assisting The Bahamas, and the Department of Defense has made available \$5 million from its Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid funds to provide military transport for aid and personnel.

While we applaud these initial actions, we believe that there are additional federal resources available for humanitarian relief to assist the people of The Bahamas. Some of those additional avenues of assistance could include federal resources already devoted to emergency

humanitarian aid, tax incentives for specific types of charitable giving that would encourage private donations, and relaxing some of the stringent visa requirements for those adversely impacted by Dorian. We believe that there are ways to find federal resources in the federal budget that would not impede foreign policy objectives elsewhere.

The people of The Bahamas are facing months and perhaps years of recovery in the wake of Hurricane Dorian. As a neighboring country in our hemisphere which has also suffered the devastating blow of hurricanes, we believe that it is within the interests of the United States to ensure that The Bahamas is able to recover from such a devastating storm. For these reasons, we respectfully encourage you to consider ways that would best assist The Bahamas at this trying time.

We stand ready to assist you in identifying resources, and working through the Appropriations process, to provide the people of The Bahamas with the assistance they urgently need.

Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress