

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

RE: Hurricane Response Assistance by Offshore Supply Vessels

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

Thank you for your continued efforts to provide the necessary and needed response to the crisis in Puerto Rico. We recognize the challenges ahead for the people of Puerto Rico and the daily need to deliver life sustaining resources such as food and water, emergency response equipment and the necessary assets to restore power throughout the Island.

We understand the unique challenges presented in responding to this crisis, and believe it will require an “all hands on deck” approach that will require the U.S. Coast Guard and FEMA to explore and utilize all available options to deliver needed supplies to these islands in the months to come. Fellow Americans have witnessed and experienced the generosity of others and are prepared to do the same for the people of Puerto Rico. We are fortunate to have many offshore supply vessels, liftboats, and multi-purpose support vessels ready and available to help aid relief efforts. While commonly used to support offshore energy production in the Gulf, these vessels are fully self-sufficient and are more than capable of aiding response efforts in Puerto Rico and if needed, throughout the Caribbean. These ships can also provide meals, sleeping capacity and laundry service for accommodated persons onboard.

Therefore, we strongly encourage the Department to rely upon previous U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) guidance for temporary emergency berthing vessels¹ and prior USCG statements concerning voyages from the US mainland to Puerto Rico². Appropriate coordination among all agencies within the Department is essential during this time.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you to provide the necessary relief to Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,

¹ Oditt, K.D. (2016). *Temporary Emergency Berthing Vessels*. Eighth Coast Guard District (dp). Policy Ltr 01-2016.

² United States. Department of Homeland Security. United States Coast Guard. *Steam Ship El Faro (O.N. 561732) Sinking and Loss of the Vessel With 33 Persons Missing and Presumed Deceased Northeast of Acklins and Crooked Island, Bahamas on October 1, 2015*. By Jason D. Neubauer. United States Coast Guard, 24 Sept. 2017.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

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United States Senator

John Kennedy

John Kennedy
United States Senator

Steve Scalise

Steve Scalise
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Duncan Hunter

Duncan Hunter
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United States Congressman

Mike Johnson

Mike Johnson
United States Congressman

Clay Higgins

Clay Higgins
United States Congressman

CC: William B. "Brock" Long, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Rear Admiral Peter J. Brown, United States Coast Guard
Rear Admiral John P. Nadeau, United States Coast Guard
Rear Admiral Paul F. Thomas, United States Coast Guard