



March 27, 2017

The Honorable Jenniffer González-Colón
U.S. House of Representatives
1529 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Resident Commissioner González-Colón:

On behalf of Puerto Rico Limpio, I am writing you today to ask for your help in closing Puerto Rico's toxic government-owned landfills. As you are aware, more than 70% of Puerto Rico's landfills are in violation of federal and local laws. This is a direct threat to the health of Puerto Ricans, especially more than 20 low-income communities across the Commonwealth that have to live near these toxic dumps.

Worse yet, in stark contrast, there is currently not a single documented case of comparable non-compliance at any RCRA Subtitle D landfill on the entire U.S. mainland. Puerto Rico stands alone against the 50 states. This is not how Puerto Rico should govern or behave if it wants to be a state, which we both support and fight for every day.

In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's own internal documents point to widespread violations of federal law, including discharging leachates into rivers, protected wetlands and sinkholes over aquifers that provide drinking water to the public.

With the passage of PROMESA, and the commitment by Speaker Paul Ryan to Puerto Rico, it is time to close these illegal landfills without further delay. In December, the bi-partisan Congressional Task Force on Economic Growth in Puerto Rico expressed "*concern*", and recommended that "*the committees of jurisdiction in Congress examine this issue ... to determine whether there are additional steps that can and should be taken.*" In response to a written question on Puerto Rico's landfills, nominee for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator, Scott Pruitt, said he expects to "*make cleanup of contaminated land one of my priorities.*"

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the financial resources to provide the Commonwealth with funds to close these landfills under Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (or the

EPA Superfund).The EPA has already documented in great detail how many landfills pose an imminent threat to public health and the environment, and therefore can act immediately.

Furthermore, we have more than enough Subtitle D compliant landfill airspace already in Puerto Rico to close down this scourge of illegal, toxic landfills tomorrow without any problems or delays to the solid waste management system.

In order to secure a bright and prosperous economic future for Puerto Rico, we must begin by closing the island's toxic landfills. We need your help today. We invite you to work with your colleagues in the House of Representatives and Administrator Pruitt to shut down these toxic landfills immediately. Your acknowledgment and speedy action in response to this emergency will improve the lives of so many Puerto Ricans and would be greatly appreciated. I look forward to working with you to make it happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HJM', with a stylized flourish at the end.

HIRAM J. TORRES MONTALVO
Co-Founder

CC: The Honorable Ricardo Rosselló, Governor of Puerto Rico
The Honorable Tania Vázquez Rivera, Secretary of PRDRNA
The Honorable Luis V. Gutierrez, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Carlos Rodriguez Mateo, Puerto Rico Senate
The Honorable Joel Franqui Atilas, Puerto Rico House of Representatives