



April 3, 2017

Administrator Scott Pruitt
Office of the Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt,

I am writing you today to ask for your help in bringing an end to a decade-long crisis on the Island of Puerto Rico. Over 70% of Puerto Rico's municipal landfills violate federal law. The EPA has documented that these landfills pose, "an imminent and substantial threat to health and the environment."

Over the last year, my organization, Puerto Rico Limpio, have documented firsthand how urgent this crisis has become. Trash is being dumped outside of unlined cells, no use of leachate controls, and some non-compliant sites are expanding into residential communities. As I write to you, a crisis in Candelaria, at the Toa Baja municipal landfill is unfolding. The landfill, which has already been determined to be an open dump in violation of federal law, is expanding. The operator is illegally dumping trash on a sloped hill that is forcing toxic sludge into the homes of nearby residents, resulting in health risks from rashes to asphyxiation. To date, no one from the EPA or Puerto Rican Government has bothered to visit these homes or stop this violation of civil rights. This is criminal neglect.

Worse, the EPA is well aware of this crisis in Puerto Rico, including what is going on in Toa Baja, and has chosen to look the other way. The Obama Administration spent the last 8 years choosing to not enforce the laws that could have brought closure to this crisis. Even after persistent communication with then-EPA administrator Gina McCarthy and former Region 2 administrator Judith Enck, no enforcement action was taken.

This crisis has been documented by the Congressional Task Force on Economic Growth in Puerto Rico's December report, by Members of the Federal Oversight Board on Puerto Rico and by yourself when addressing a question on this crisis as part of your confirmation hearings.

Administrator Pruitt, the laws governing solid waste management are not new, they have been in use for almost 30 years. We urge you to use existing legal authority under Resource

Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) section 7003 and existing budgets such as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) to close these sites immediately, and put locks on the gates.

I hope your administration can see the situation is dire and in need of your immediate attention. This is an opportunity to right the wrongs of the past Administration.

Sincerely,

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

HIRAM J. TORRES MONTALVO
Co-Founder