

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING COMMISSION ON PUERTO RICO RELIEF

Jersey City - Governor Phil Murphy today signed an Executive Order establishing the Commission on Puerto Rico Relief, an 18-member commission that will collaborate with state and federal agencies to expedite processes benefiting displaced Puerto Ricans in New Jersey, as well as examine ways the state can aid the island.

"It is unacceptable that five months after Hurricane Maria made landfall on Puerto Rico, so many of our fellow Americans are still feeling the impacts of the storm," Governor Murphy said. "This joint commission will help the approximately 30,000 Puerto Ricans who have taken refuge in New Jersey by directing our state agencies to fast-track help for those who have been displaced. We also must find additional ways to help the island and return Puerto Ricans to normalcy. The federal response has been insufficient and we must step up as a state to help our brothers and sisters on the island."

"I would like to thank New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy for creating the Puerto Rico Commission," said Puerto Rican Governor Ricardo Rosselló. "Governor Murphy and the state of New Jersey have been great allies in the recovery process of Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane María. We will work hand in hand with the Commission to make sure that it is successful in its mission."

Murphy was joined by Carlos Mercader, the Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration

"On behalf of the Government of Puerto Rico, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to the State of New Jersey and Governor Phil Murphy for creating the New Jersey Puerto Rico Commission to assist Puerto Rican evacuees in the state, as well as those affected in Puerto Rico," said Executive Director Mercader

In December, Governor Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy traveled to Puerto Rico with members of the Legislature, business community, and faith-based community to assess and assist with recovery efforts. There, Governor Murphy met with Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rosselló and promised to continue relief efforts.

Governor Murphy's Executive Order will mandate the Commission to work with state agencies to ascertain services already provided to Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican evacuees in New Jersey. The Executive Order will further require that the Commission work with federal agencies to expedite processes that will benefit Puerto Ricans in New Jersey in need of services, as well as non-profit agencies that provide safety-net services to all those who have been displaced.

Governor Murphy's Executive Order will task the Joint Commission to consult with the aforementioned entities and examine:

- The moratorium on mortgage and reverse mortgage foreclosures in Puerto Rico that is set to expire on March 19, 2018;
- Power generation on the island;
- Resources available to students and professors who have evacuated or remain unable to complete coursework in Puerto Rico;
- Volunteer tourism whereby New Jerseyans are encouraged to visit Puerto Rico and assist nonprofit recovery organizations, and potential tax credits and/or deductions that can be issued for services rendered;
- Recruitment of volunteer lawyers to pursue denial appeals of FEMA benefits.

The members of the Joint Commission are:

- Rev. Joshua Rodriguez (Pastor, Cityline Church & National Latino Evangelical Coalition) - Chair
- Peggy Anastos (former Chief of Staff, Office of Attorney General & NJ Puerto Rican Congress) – Vice Chair
- Ana Montero (CEO, American Red Cross NJ)

- Arlene Quiñones Perez (Partner, DeCotiis & former President of Hispanic Bar Association)
- Jay Jimenez (Chief of Staff, NJ Department of Transportation)
- Carmen Garcia (New Jersey State Parole Board & Trustee of Hispanic Bar Association)
- Lydia Valencia (CEO, NJ Puerto Rican Congress)
- Hector Ruiz (Partner, Walsh Pizzi & President of Hispanic Bar Association)
- Gualberto "Gil" Medina (Executive Vice President, CBRE)
- Tonio Burgos (Tonio Burgos & Associates)
- Arianna Mouré (Associate, Florio Perrucci & Trustee of Hispanic Bar Association)
- Sam Delgado (VP of External Affairs, Verizon)
- Alixon Collazos (LUPE Fund)
- Idida Rodriguez (1868 Public Affairs)
- Al Alvarez (Chief of Staff, NJ School Development Authority)
- Ivette Alvarez (Partner, Einhorn, Harris & former President of Hispanic Bar Association)

Text of Executive Order 10 is online (<http://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-10.pdf>).

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