

MONTH, XX YEAR



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899-

CONTACT NAME
POSITION
HOSPITAL/SCHOOL NAME
ADDRESS

Dear CONTACT NAME:

I am writing to request your cooperation with my agency, the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), as we assess the impact of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico. The goal of our work is to consider and recommend improvements in building codes, standards and practices to make communities across the United States more resilient to hurricanes and other disasters.

NIST has a long history of studying disasters – including hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and fires – which has led to recommendations and changes to keep people safer. NIST has statutory authority to study these disasters and to make recommendations, but it has no regulatory authority to require its recommendations to be followed. Rather, NIST works cooperatively with government agencies at all levels as well as with the private sector and academia. As we examine the impacts of Hurricane Maria, we have been working closely with many Puerto Rico departments and agencies, including the Departments of Health and Education, which has been very helpful. More information about our efforts is available at:

<https://www.nist.gov/topics/disaster-failure-studies/hurricane-maria>

In Puerto Rico, NIST is being assisted by Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., an engineering consulting firm, and by the Horsley Witten Group, Inc., an environmental engineering and planning firm that is supporting the social science data collection being conducted in Puerto Rico. Stantec has organized a team of engineering experts based in Puerto Rico to aid us in gathering data and understanding the effects of the hurricane on critical buildings, including hospitals, schools, and shelters. Horsley Witten has organized a team of social science experts to aid us in gathering data and understanding the event's impact on the loss and recovery of social functions, including the services provided by hospitals and schools.

NIST has selected **HOSPITAL/SCHOOL NAME** to include in our survey of social institutions. Your staff could significantly advance our efforts – thereby improving future public safety – by cooperating with Stantec and the Horsley Witten Group. On behalf of NIST, Horsley Witten will be interested in identifying appropriate staff to provide information (via surveys or interviews) on the loss and recovery of services following the hurricane.

Major findings and recommendations of our study will be published widely. However, we do not share all information that is gathered as part of our effort – especially security-sensitive, proprietary, or personally identifiable information.

We earnestly hope that you will be able to cooperate with NIST, Stantec, and the Horsley Witten team. The results of our work can go a long way to improving public safety in Puerto Rico and more broadly in the future. The results will certainly be relevant to your particular facility, and

NIST

we will ensure that you are provided with that information directly. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at maria.dillard@nist.gov or 202-281-0908.

Also, please consider Dr. Domingo J. Marqués the point of contact for the Horsley Witten team. Dr. Marqués can be reached at dmarques@albizu.edu or 787-725-6500, ext. 1999. Dr. Juan Carlos Virella Crespo is the point of contact for the Stantec Team and may be reached at NISTstudyPuertoRico@stantec.com and jcvirella@yahoo.com or 787-453-8600.

Sincerely,

Maria Dillard, Ph.D.
NIST Hurricane Maria Team Associate Lead

cc:

Dr. Joseph Main, NIST Hurricane Maria Team Lead
Dr. Juan Carlos Virella Crespo, Stantec Team member
Dr. Domingo Marqués, Horsley Witten Team member, Albizu University