

# Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee, *Charter IV*, Recommendation Fact Sheet

## **Recommendation #9 (Approved, November 16, 2017):**

The destruction caused by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, while tragic, presents a unique opportunity for the U.S. renewable energy and energy efficiency (RE&EE) industries to serve as a catalyst for economic recovery for Puerto Rico. This recovery could also serve as a case study for U.S. export markets facing similar recovery issues in the Caribbean and globally. The stakes include not only the island's recovery, but the U.S. balance of trade. If U.S. RE&EE industries do not build fast market share in Puerto Rico, its electrical infrastructure and generation needs may be met by imports. Furthermore, the U.S. pharmaceutical industry in Puerto Rico, the source of 25% of U.S. pharmaceutical exports in 2016 and 30% of Puerto Rico's economy, is a global export industry that needs assured, lower cost, reliable energy.

We recommend that the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) emphasize that the rebuilding of Puerto Rico's electricity grid should incorporate state-of-the-art electric generation, transmission and distribution control and management systems as well as integrate distributed generation resources, microgrids, renewable fuels, biomass power, high-value energy efficiency, energy storage, and other RE&EE products that support increased resiliency.

We recommend that DOC work to utilize already-appropriated funds from various Federal agencies, programs, and authorities to support the above RE&EE deployments to meet DOC's goal of promoting economic recovery in the affected region by enhancing the resilience, efficiency, and reliability of the energy and communication grids. We recommend that DOC invite industry to work through the Economic Development Administration's Technical Assistance Program and the University Assistance Program to achieve these goals.

We recommend that the U.S. Department of Commerce (i.e., ITA, EDA) utilize the tools and programs at its disposal to help connect U.S. industry with all levels of government decision-makers by:

- Creating a coordination group within DOC to form liaisons between private industry and other Federal agencies on the response and recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands;
- Increasing awareness among Federal agencies of the U.S. RE&EE capabilities (technologies and services) through education and formal outreach;
- Assembling and providing a public list of U.S. Government points of contact for federal disaster response and recovery efforts to the U.S. RE&EE industry;
- Assembling and providing a public list of contacts within Puerto Rico that are responsible for addressing the following issues related to disaster response and recovery: electric grid repair and resiliency, building restoration and renovation, critical infrastructure, water, wastes, and transportation;
- In partnership with the REEEAC and industry trade associations, compiling case studies of U.S. technologies and services used throughout world markets in similar circumstances that can assist Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands officials and others

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with new ideas and technical expertise to assist decision-making and long-term planning; and

- Assembling a list of U.S. RE&EE goods and services that meet electricity and renewable fuel needs which can increase operational energy both in the immediate rebuilding period and over the long term, at a lower total life cycle cost, and with greater reliability and resiliency than the previously existing technology.

**Sub-Committee:** Export Competitiveness

## **Background Information:**

What we learn from addressing this situation in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands will position U.S. industries and the DOC to be more prepared and competitive in global markets.

The REEEAC also plans to address unique financing issues related to the Puerto Rican recovery effort, that also arise in international disaster recovery and deployment efforts, and will deliver to the Secretary those related recommendations subsequently.

## **Expected Impact on Export Competitiveness:**

- Increased sales and long-term relationships for U.S. RE&EE companies in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Innovative, rapid deployment and rebuilding efforts that will create a more sustainable environment as well as profitable financial opportunities in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Demonstrated grid repair and resilience case studies and lessons learned that allow DOC and U.S. RE&EE companies to create new synergies and export business opportunities globally.

## **Specific Agencies Responsible for Implementation:**

- U.S. Department of Commerce (including the Economic Development Agency)

## **Metric to Track Success:**

- U.S. RE&EE installations by kWh and BTU content.
- Timeline acceleration in restoring critical power infrastructure post-disaster