

**To:** Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard  
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**Subject:** House Natural Resources: Puerto Rico utility ignored lawyers' advice in hiring Whitefish Energy

By Ben Lefebvre

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Puerto Rico's electric utility ignored advice from its own lawyers when it signed a contract with Whitefish Energy in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, according to [documents](#) released ahead of a House Natural Resources Committee hearing today.

Law firm Greenberg Traurig advised Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority to include language in the contract that would cap the amount of money Whitefish Energy could charge, allow PREPA to terminate the agreement for any breach of contract and make Whitefish responsible for paying Puerto Rican taxes, among other requirements. But none were included, the [committee said](#) in its summary of the documents.

PREPA last month canceled the \$300 million contract with Whitefish, a relatively unknown, two-man operation based in Montana.

Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello reiterated to lawmakers that he has launched two investigations into how the contract came about, but Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah) said the governor would have to do more if he wants Congress to support his [request](#) for disaster assistance.

"You have a credibility gap," Bishop said of PREPA's behavior. "You're asking for \$90 billion. Simply telling me you've launched two investigations isn't sufficient."

PREPA Director Ricardo Ramos, who declined to attend the House hearing, told the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee earlier today that he ultimately chose Whitefish Energy because no other companies would work with the bankrupt territory. In response to questions from Ranking Democrat [Maria Cantwell](#) (D-Wash.), Ramos said he was not aware of anyone with PREPA receiving kickbacks from the company.

*To view online:*

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