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Sent: 12/20/2017 7:10:30 PM
Subject: Gov. Rick Scott: Congress Must Pass Hurricane Disaster Relief Funding



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 20, 2017

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Gov. Rick Scott: Congress Must Pass Hurricane Disaster Relief Funding

NAPLES, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott issued the below statement urging Congress to pass a disaster relief funding package which includes critical funding for local school districts enrolling students displaced from Puerto Rico, supports key infrastructure projects, and provides relief for citrus and agriculture in Florida.

Governor Scott said, "For more than three months, Floridians have been fighting to recover from the horrible destruction of Hurricane Irma, especially those in Florida's citrus industry. Now, while we continue to recover from Hurricane Irma, we are also lending a helping hand to our neighbors from Puerto Rico who have been displaced by Hurricane Maria and are now coming to Florida.

"The much-needed disaster relief funding recently proposed by the U.S. House of Representatives is encouraging. For months, I have been urging the federal government to assist Florida's recovery and I am glad to see that they have listened to our requests and included it in their proposal. The recovery funding would aid Florida citrus growers, help our school districts educate displaced students from Puerto Rico, and assist to repair Florida infrastructure. Now, Congress must vote and pass a bill immediately.

"Congress also needs to make it clear that the funding included in their package for infrastructure projects should go toward the needed critical repairs to the federal Herbert Hoover Dike surrounding Lake Okeechobee. As Hurricane Irma was bearing down on our state, we were forced to evacuate communities surrounding the lake due to safety concerns identified by the Army Corps of Engineers. The lake reached dangerous levels, and Florida cannot go through another hurricane season without exploring all avenues of federal funding to fix the dike. For the first time, we secured \$50 million in state funding to help expedite these federal repairs this year, and it is imperative that Congress acts on this federal project now."

Action taken by Governor Scott to urge federal disaster relief:

- On October 5th, the Governor entered into a host-state agreement with FEMA – Florida is the only state willing to enter into this type of agreement to help families displaced by Hurricane Maria.

- On October 6th, Governor Scott spoke with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.
- On October 11th, Governor Scott traveled to Washington D.C. joined by Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam to meet with members of the Florida congressional delegation to discuss Hurricane Irma and Florida's citrus industry.
- On October 11th, Governor Scott met with Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman of the House Committee On Agriculture Congressman Mike Conaway, Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security Congressman Michael McCaul, and Congresswoman Jenniffer González-Colón.
- On October 11th, November 13th and November 17th, the Governor spoke with White House Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney.
- On October 30th, the Governor's office sent a letter Office of Management and Budget. See the letter [HERE](#).
- On November 9th, the Governor activated the State Emergency Response Team to assist families displaced by Hurricane Maria. See the Governor's press release [HERE](#).
- On November 15th, the Governor sent a letter to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Ryan urging them to support Florida's recovery following Hurricane Irma, Florida's efforts to support those displaced from Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ongoing repairs to the Herbert Hoover Dike. See the Governor's letter [HERE](#).
- On November 28th, Governor Scott spoke with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson.
- On December 15th, the Governor spoke to House Speaker Paul Ryan urging immediate action to help Florida citrus growers.
- On December 19th, the Governor spoke with Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Senator John Hoeven.
- On December 19th, the Governor spoke with Congressman Vern Buchanan regarding citrus relief.
- On December 20th, Governor Scott spoke with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

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