



November 15, 2017

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The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
The Honorable Nita Lowey
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Committee Leaders,

As Congress considers the next round of emergency funding for the recovery of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA) recommends serious consideration of both legislative changes and additional agency funding that could help our industries drive the recovery of both regions and reduce the costs of recovery to the federal government.

Congress previously considered legislation to expand the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lands Act to include the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) offshore the Territories of the United States. This change was supported by the Obama Administration. We encourage you to take this action as part of the next recovery package for the territories. By doing so, Congress would provide a statutory structure for the management of the renewable and traditional energy and mineral resources that are not currently covered by existing law.

Unfortunately, the territories have been neglected in this regard because no federal agency actually has the authority for overseeing energy, including renewable energy, and mineral development in the EEZ offshore. In addition, the Federal government is unable to evaluate potential resources in conjunction with the territorial governments for potential resources until OCSLA is extended to these areas. Clarifying the Secretary of the Interior's authority and responsibility under OCSLA will provide the support and opportunity for a comprehensive process for planning and developing any conventional energy, renewable energy and mineral resources in coordination with the territories.

In addition, the Committees should provide funding to the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to begin the environmental and planning processes necessary for energy development off the coast of the territories. We also recommend additional funding for the Department of

Energy's National Laboratories to examine the potential energy resources off the territories in conjunction with the recovery process.

America's offshore energy industries are ready to contribute to the recovery and rebuilding of Puerto Rico and the USVI. For example, offshore wind can potentially provide significant investment into the recovery process by providing both alternative generation and significant investment in onshore infrastructure. This private investment, only made possible through sound public planning by the Department of the Interior in conjunction with the territorial government, can both spur economic recovery and also offset federal recovery investment.

We hope that you will consider these changes and help America's offshore industries to bring jobs, investment and energy to the process of building a better tomorrow for the territories.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randall Luthi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "L".

Randall Luthi
President