

November 1, 2017

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Rush:

On behalf of our members, PhRMA wants to thank you for convening the November 2, 2017, hearing on “The 2017 Hurricane Season: A Review of Emergency Response and Energy Infrastructure Recovery Efforts.” We appreciate your consideration of this important issue and want to provide additional information as you focus on the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico after two recent hurricanes – most notably Hurricane Maria – struck the island this season. Specifically, we want to provide information about how our members with manufacturing or other interests there are managing with the devastation and highlight areas where additional assistance would aid in returning Puerto Rico’s manufacturing base to full capacity and maintain that base in the longer term.

While our members have a substantial manufacturing presence on the island, our industry recognizes that we are just one of many entities adversely impacted by these Hurricanes and that the situation on the ground is extremely challenging for many families and businesses. To help address these challenges, our members are working with government at every level and private stakeholders to help coordinate relief on the ground and to provide people impacted by the disaster with access to medicines, potable water and other necessary supplies. PhRMA and many of our members are also working closely with Healthcare Ready, an independent relief organization we helped establish which coordinates the delivery of medicines and other healthcare resources to people impacted by natural disasters.

These hurricanes have also had an adverse impact on our manufacturing facilities and the welfare of many of our employees in Puerto Rico. We are working in close coordination with federal, commonwealth, and local agencies to restore our facilities to 100 percent capacity, and we are making good progress.

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With respect to the medicines we manufacture, supply is generally stable. More importantly, we believe that these supplies will be sufficient to meet the short term needs of patients and the health care community. This determination is based on the contingency planning that our member companies have undertaken, the ability of our member companies to shift production to other manufacturing locations and the reserve supplies of medicines they maintain.

We have particularly appreciated the leadership of Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the collaborative efforts of FDA's Drug Shortage Team and Emergency Operations Center. FDA has shared information with our members and displayed great willingness to discuss alternatives to assure continued product supply. However, if services, especially electricity, are not restored in the near future, the supply situation could worsen.

To further this progress, we thought it would be helpful to share with you some discrete areas where additional assistance could accelerate the restoration of our members' manufacturing capabilities to full capacity. These areas include:

Restoring the Power Supply and the Electrical Grid

- This is a critical issue as generators have run for prolonged periods, and reliance on generators for manufacturing operations is suboptimal. The dearth of available skilled electrical technicians and generator service technicians exacerbates the issue.
- Resumption of electrical power would also help decrease employee absenteeism and restore normalcy to employees' lives.

Returning Employees to Work Safely

- Food security and facilitating the resupply of groceries would help employees return to work safe and healthy. Economic aid would support the local population and ensure a stable social environment.
- Restoration of roads and road lighting would allow employees to travel safely during daytime and at night and facilitate resumption of around-the-clock manufacturing operations.

Restoring Municipal Water and Waste Water Systems

- Ensuring that water can be reliably and safely sourced, and that waste water can be treated, would enable employees to resume more healthy living conditions and would help our industry restore manufacturing to full capacity.

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Facilitating Efficient Transportation

- Alleviating congestion and blockages on roads and at port terminals would facilitate the transportation of goods and materials on and off the island.
- Adequate fuel supplies would help ensure generator power is maintained (until electrical power is fully restored) and that vehicles on the island are able to transport supplies and employees.

Restoring Telecommunications, Cellular and Internet Service

- Limitations on service restrict communications between and among companies' multiple plants on Puerto Rico and their ability to coordinate with employees and government agencies.

Sincerely,

