

October 14, 2021

Chair Raul Grijalva
Mr. Bruce Westerman,
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Mr. Brian Modeste
Staff Director
House Committee on Natural Resources
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Mr. Ivan Robles
Policy Aide
Office of Insular Affairs
House Committee on Natural Resources
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Supplemental Information for Hearing on the PREPA Post Implementation of the LUMA
Transmission and Distribution Contract

Dear Chair Grijalva and Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the hearing regarding PREPA Post Implementation of the LUMA Transmission and Distribution Contract. In addition to the written testimony submitted on October 4, 2021, I submit this supplemental letter and the written comments of David Sotomayor-Ramírez, Ph.D., Professor of Soil Science, University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, College of Agricultural Sciences titled, The case for preserving agricultural land area in Puerto Rico and green-energy projects. In his comments, Dr. Sotomayor highlights the importance of preserving agricultural land in Puerto Rico in the context of proposals to build utility scale renewable energy projects on these important resources. The comments and graph show that Puerto Rico lost approximately 70% of agricultural land-area between 1964 and 2018.

Other scholars have noted the importance of preserving agricultural land in Puerto Rico noting that, “Given the relatively small size and mountainous terrain of Puerto Rico, innovation will be important to keep key watersheds and mountain slopes forested, and to increase sustainability and productivity on all working lands.” Land Use, Conservation, Forestry, and Agriculture in Puerto Rico William A. Gould, Frank H. Wadsworth, Maya Quiñones, Stephen J. Fain and Nora L. Álvarez-Berríos, *Forests* 2017, 8, 242; doi:10.3390/f8070242, <http://www.mdpi.com/journal/forests>, P.14. The study further documents that, “In recent decades, 14 percent of the island’s prime agricultural land has been converted to urban use through development, with arguably more being restricted by non-agricultural uses, such as

residential (lawns) or recreational (golf courses) uses.” Id, P.15. The authors coincide with Dr. Sotomayor’s comments on the importance of the preservation of remaining agricultural land to ensure food security for future generations.

Dr. Sotomayor’s comments emphasize the advantages and the important role of rooftop or on-site solar systems to preserve agricultural land in Puerto Rico. However, as indicated in my written testimony dated October 4, 2021, there is a backlog in interconnection of rooftop solar and storage installations. LUMA Energy claims that it is addressing the backlog however a document prepared by LUMA acknowledges that the interconnections are incomplete. The attached document titled, Net Metering Program Update indicates that, “The Final completion of projects and Service Agreement still awaits completion of remaining steps in the Portal (Study, Supplemental Study, etc)” Id, p.8. LUMA’s delays in completing interconnections and issuing the requisite Service Agreements has a chilling effect on the deployment of rooftop solar in Puerto Rico and aggravates the energy crisis.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

s/ Ruth Santiago

Ruth Santiago

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