

**Written testimony of the Puerto Rico Not For Sale Campaign before the
US Committee on Natural Resources Office of Insular Affairs
November 17, 2022**

Demands

The Puerto Rico Not For Sale Campaign's demands are the following: the immediate cancelation of the LUMA contract, the return of the power grid to the public energy utility equipped with funding and chosen by a board of democratically elected consumers/electric workers, all displaced workers reinstated immediately and their collective bargaining agreements honored, and lastly a plan to implement public, affordable renewable energy following the *Queremos Sol* proposal.

Lack of Transparency

On September 21, 2022 at the Negociado para El Manejo de Emergencias y Administración de Desastres press conference, LUMA claimed that 395,206 customers had their electricity restored after Hurricane Fiona made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 18, 2022. Maps from an aerial view show that the only place with electricity was in the Metro area, notably in San Juan, the main tourist location of the country. LUMA informed customers about a website displaying a map of electricity restoration in real time. However, when a reporter asked why the page was inaccessible, LUMA claimed the website had crashed. There were 1.4 million LUMA customers without power in September after FIONA, but LUMA claimed then that one fifth of the country had their power restored. Below the map shows the state of the privatized electric power grid in Puerto Rico.



LUMA's numbers combine those who already have generators that remained with power and those whose power has already been restored, essentially providing miscalculated data and deceiving the public.

LUMA Energy
Customers Tracked: 1,468,223 Customers Out: 1,073,000 Last Updated: 2022-09-21 12:45:51 PM
Provider Website Outage Website Coverage Map

LUMA has reenergized some circuits after an island wide blackout caused by hurricane Fiona, however there is limited information available. The numbers below are an estimate based on available information from LUMA.

Puerto Rico

County	Customers Tracked	Customers Out
Arecibo	177,369	146,000
Bayamon	216,496	143,000
Caguas	250,514	165,000
Carolina	141,663	108,000
Mayaguez	216,605	179,000
Ponce	212,508	168,000
San Juan	253,068	164,000

Activate Windows

Consequences of the power outages caused by LUMA and the privatization of the electric grid

As a result of the constant power outages caused by LUMA and their inadequacy, hospitals with life saving machines are forced to run on generators, schools have been forced to close because of a lack of electricity and infrastructure, necessities like running, potable water are a luxury. There have been many LUMA customers who have been without power for months, but are still receiving higher than average electric bills in a country that is already impoverished as a result of our colonial status. It is crucial to note that the deaths caused by Hurricane Fiona were not as a result of the physical hurricane itself, especially considering it was only a category 1 hurricane. The deaths were the result of not having electricity to power life-saving equipment. Fast forward to November 2022, and there are still Puerto Ricans without power.

Evidence that LUMA is inadequate to maintain the electric grid

LUMA has received hundreds of millions of dollars in funding, but continues to be incapable of maintaining, repairing or upgrading Puerto Rico's power grid. It has become a way of life for the people of Puerto Rico to experience both power outages and high electric bills with no end in sight. LUMA hires workers from the US who are not qualified electricians, and therefore are unable to maintain, repair or upgrade the power grid. This contributes to the number of outages experienced with LUMA, versus those which took place before the power grid was privatized. LUMA hires unqualified outside workers who are not only ignorant of Puerto Rico's power grid, but also of the language and customs of the communities they work in.

In addition, while many of Puerto Rico's skilled and experienced electrical workers are being displaced into unrelated municipal jobs, others are left unemployed when they can not be absorbed into the local economy. These factors all contribute to harming the local population.

Colonial Status

Restructuring of the debt by la Junta has been focused on paying Wall Street not on helping *us* rise up from bankruptcy. The economy, our educational system, our housing and public health systems have not benefited from the massive "restructuring" the Junta has subjected Puerto Rico to. The debt in question should not be repaid, as the US owes Puerto Rico reparations for its 124 years of economic and military occupation. We need only remember the ongoing impact of over 60 years of the US Naval bombing of the populated island of Vieques to understand what is meant by reparations. As a territory Puerto Rico has the highest cost of living, more than any state, with many people living below the poverty line. These are conditions that in any other country in the world would be considered deplorable and inhumane, yet are ignored or downplayed when it comes to the United States' treatment of Puerto Rico. The people of Puerto Rico want and deserve an independent country.

We urge this Committee to help us in our goal of ensuring our people are able to survive. The people of Puerto Rico deserve a sustainable electric system that contributes to and improves their quality of life, instead of the profit making bottom line of a private company like LUMA. Queremos Sol! Cancel the contract with LUMA!

Signed,

Fermín Morales Ayala

Spokesperson
Puerto Rico Not For Sale Campaign

