

February 20, 2023

The Honorable Jenniffer González-Colón
U.S. House of Representatives,
2338 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Honorable Jenniffer González-Colón:

Foundation for Puerto Rico (FPR) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that for the last decade has worked to make Puerto Rico's economy both thriving and sustainable. FPR seeks to unleash the island's potential in the global economy, so more people can live, visit, work, and invest in our beautiful paradise. We go from knowledge to action, combining innovative, data driven thinking with strong, field-based work across the island. In our targeted economic development and resiliency programs, we work hand in hand with our community partners and the Government of Puerto Rico, providing resources, training, funding, and networks that improve the local economy from within by creating monetizable value for the world. Our work has resulted in the development of a visitor economy initiative that leverages the unique natural and cultural assets of our island and its communities as the basis for Puerto Rico to become a premier experiential destination for the world. We are working with communities throughout the island to ensure those visitors flows come to where they are most needed and so that those communities can take full advantage of the benefits.

FPR supports the Bill to amend the National Trails System Act to provide for a study of the Puerto Rico National Scenic Trail. We are thankful for these efforts as well as all the work by the local USDA Forest Service team, led by Mr. Keenan Adams. They are encouraging the community to be involved in key recovery efforts to ensure continuation, and supporting participatory and inclusive planning processes led by local key stakeholders in the region.

As stated in canocum.org, "The Northeast Trail Network has been nationally recognized as a critical undertaking to ensure access to outdoor spaces and conservation of special treasured natural habitats of Puerto Rico. The creation of networks, not just of physical trails, but of organizations interacting along natural resources, will provide new socioeconomic opportunities for NGOs, citizens, businesses, and public institutions. The Northeast Trail Network will allow users to enjoy the natural resources in El Yunque and its periphery, will increase knowledge about the different ecosystems of the region and their interactions. Moreover, will promote stewardship and provide new economic development opportunities for the area. By providing access and a greater connectivity level, the trail network adds value to a complete region, rather than a limited localized effect."



**Foundation
for Puerto Rico™**

FPR has been working in the eastern region since 2020, after various natural events devastated the island. We worked with the community on the creation of the first community destination plans for [Naguabo/Ceiba](#) and [Luquillo/Fajardo](#), as part of our [Bottom Up Destination Recovery Initiative](#) funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). We are now assisting in the creation of various community resiliency plans as part of the Puerto Rico Housing Department's [Whole Community Resiliency Planning program](#). Also, we are currently working in Cubuy, Naguabo to assist community leaders with their key local initiative: [Destino 191 El Yunque del Caribe](#) which will soon serve as an additional official entrance to El Yunque National Forest. This in partnership with USDA Rural Development.

We are looking forward to collaborating with the USDA Forest Service, and all partners, to continue working on the decentralization of tourism and ensuring all communities can benefit from a growing visitor economy and the positive impact in Puerto Rico's economic development.

If we can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time via email alma.frontera@foundationpr.org or at 787-640-2118.

Sincerely,

Alma Frontera
Vice President Operations & Programs