



CITY OF FLINT

Dr. Karen W. Weaver

Mayor

October 4, 2017

Dear Honorable Carmen Yulin Cruz,

The people of Flint stand side-by-side with you, and we commend you. We send our prayers, and this letter in hopes to edify your strength. You must stand steadfast and continue to do everything in your power to save your people.

President Trump's phrase, "They want everything to be done for them," broke my heart, and the hearts of many Americans. Unfortunately, his visit to Puerto Rico, this week, did not assure me of healing and I was hoping for healing and support. Instead his comparisons and complaints gauged deeper wounds.

I believe that President Trump is misinformed about what an "austerity budget" means. It is nearly impossible to help ourselves when the core infrastructure is in disarray and there is a severe lack of adequate resources, to resolve the immediate life-impacting issues. In May, Natural Resources Defense Council Health Director, Eric Olson announced that because of Puerto Rico's fiscal challenges, the island faced a water crisis and nothing was done then to address, resolve or act. Now, the recent hurricanes have pushed this near crisis over the edge and now into an emergency state.

The people need a voice, and as elected officials, we are the voice of the people that we took an oath to serve. I commend you for shouting, screaming, yelling if necessary to get the response the people of San Juan deserve. It is our duty to our citizens. It is our families, our friends, and our neighbors, we are serving.

I too, have had to speak out, and to call for the Emergency in Flint, regardless of what other officials thought. Flint's water crisis was started by government decisions to save money, but leaders refused to acknowledge their mistake and take action. By the time we were switched back to a safe drinking water source, our pipes were corroded from the untreated water. We still use bottled water and filters while we pull up and replace over 18,000 lead-tainted service lines that were funded through the U.S. Congress after a hard fight. Meanwhile, we received the terrible news that fertility in Flint had dropped due to exposure to lead. The Michigan Civil Rights Commission said that in dismissing our concerns, the poisoning of our water supply abridged the civil rights of Flint residents under state law. Our crisis is not over, and years may pass before we understand the full extent of the impact of the dismissing of our concerns.

This is why I felt a special sisterhood, and connection to your concern for your community, and your desperate plea for action. We cannot sit idly back and allow more people to become infected with disease and illnesses. We cannot allow the slow walking of aid, and the tying of victims' hands with bureaucracy. It is fair for us to demand clear answers.

I am utterly disappointed and outraged by the lack of active engagement and support from this administration during the recent visit. Self-congratulations and political agendas have no place in the realm of public health in the face of survival. Survival is everyone's first priority. We will relentlessly continue to press and demand for this administration and all the appropriate federal agencies to acknowledge and sympathize with your plight, and do everything possible to make the situation better. Flint, Michigan stands with the people of Puerto Rico as you fight through your urgent water crisis.

#FLINTSTRONG #PUERTORICOFUERTE

Yours,

Karen Weaver

Mayor

City of Flint, Michigan