

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-5401**

September 29, 2010

The Honorable Cecilia Muñoz  
Co-Chair, The President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status  
Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Director Muñoz:

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, I wrote to you regarding my proposal to create and implement a green plan for the island municipality of Vieques. I stated in that letter that while it was imperative for us to speak frankly about Vieques' past and to examine the ways in which this past has affected present-day life on the island, we should also be forward-looking, constantly striving to improve the future for Vieques and its people. Since I wrote my letter, we have already begun to take the important first steps—at all levels of government—to convert the vision of "Vieques Verde" into reality.

Yesterday I received a letter from Puerto Rico Senator Lornna Soto, expressing enthusiasm about the Vieques green initiative and urging that it be expanded to include the nearby island municipality of Culebra—whose roughly 2,000 residents Senator Soto represents. Because I believe that Senator Soto makes a compelling case, I wanted to promptly share her recommendation with you and the other members of the Task Force.

Culebra, like Vieques, bears the scars of a difficult past. The Navy conducted ship-to-shore bombing exercises and other live-fire training activities for over 70 years in unpopulated areas of Culebra and its surrounding waters. In 1974, Congress enacted legislation directing the Navy to cease operations in Culebra, in response to longstanding concerns among the residents about safety, health, and environmental risks. (The Navy moved its Culebra operations to nearby training facilities on Vieques, which were closed in 2003 due to similar concerns.) The Navy has since transferred all of its former land on Culebra to the government of Puerto Rico and the Fish and Wildlife Service within the U.S. Department of the Interior. As you know, Governor Fortuño and I have been working closely with your office, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of the Defense, and the armed services committees in both the House and Senate to ensure that the federal government will take the steps necessary to remove any unexploded ordnance and to mitigate other safety threats on its former property on Culebra—especially Flamenco Beach, one of the loveliest places in the world.

As in the case of Vieques, a number of factors—ranging from Culebra's long history as a military training range to its relatively isolated geographic location—have combined to generate

challenging economic conditions for the people of the island. Vieques Verde, as described in my previous letter, would consist of education programs, recycling and conservation initiatives, renewable energy production projects, and incentives for the expanded use of clean-energy vehicles. As Senator Soto correctly observes, extending the current initiative to encompass Culebra would create jobs in various green industries, expand economic opportunities, encourage sustainable development, and generally enhance the quality of life for residents of that island. Given Culebra's small size, moreover, its inclusion would not pose meaningful cost issues.

I should underscore that, earlier this month, Governor Fortuño directed the creation of a task force to implement Vieques Verde. Notably, one of the task force's primary goals will be to develop an electric vehicle infrastructure for both Vieques *and* Culebra. It bears emphasis that this task force is only one component of a much broader effort by Governor Fortuño, the Puerto Rico Legislature and the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) to promote clean energy solutions for the Island. In July, the Governor signed two important bills into law: the first sets ambitious renewable energy production targets and establishes a Renewable Energy Commission to oversee progress towards these targets; the second creates a Green Energy Fund through which the government of Puerto Rico will invest hundreds of millions of dollars in renewable energy projects over the next ten years.

In my last letter, I noted that the idea of a green plan for Vieques was rooted in my deeply-held belief that this beautiful island has enormous untapped potential and that its best days are still to come. I think the same holds true for Culebra. I respectfully urge the federal government to expand its green initiative in Vieques to include Culebra, and look forward to our continued collaboration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Luis G. Fortuño, Governor of Puerto Rico  
The Honorable Lornna Soto, Member, Puerto Rico Senate  
The Honorable Abraham Peña Nieves, Mayor of Culebra  
Brandon Hurlbut, Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Energy  
Anthony Babauta, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas, U.S. Department of the Interior  
Tammie Trevino, Administrator of the Rural Housing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Judith Enck, Region 2 Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency