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October 26, 2017

Responding to the widespread destruction from three catastrophic hurricanes, massive wildfires, and a bankrupt federal flood insurance program, the House passed a \$36.5 billion disaster aid package (H.R.2266) on October 12. The aid package includes \$18.7 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund, \$16 billion for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), \$576.6 million for combating wildfires, and \$4.9 billion in low-interest, community disaster loans to Puerto Rico to help the government pay its employees. Additionally, Puerto Rico would receive the same emergency nutrition assistance as other states struck by the hurricanes. This relief package follows \$15 billion approved last month for immediate relief after Hurricane Harvey and is more generous than the \$29 billion request from the White House.

The Senate passed H.R.2266 without amendment on October 24, and the President signed the aid package into law on October 26. Lawmakers anticipate continued assistance will be needed in the near future. On October 5, Texas officials sent a letter to congressional appropriators outlining their state's need for \$125 billion to recover and rebuild from the damages caused by Hurricane Harvey. The following day, the Florida congressional delegation sent a similar letter requesting \$27 billion for Hurricane Irma's statewide impacts. Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Nevares also sent a letter to congressional leadership on October 7 expressing the U.S. territory's gratitude for the federal emergency management assistance provided thus far and indicating that they will require supplemental funds to cover an anticipated total of \$95 billion in damages – approximately 150% of Puerto Rico's Gross National Product.

Meanwhile, wildfires continue to ravage the northwest. In 2017 alone, wildfires have already burned more than 8.5 million acres of land, damaging popular recreation sites, producing hazardous air quality, threatening national parks, destroying hundreds of structures and prompting nearly 20,000 people to evacuate their homes. The Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions, representing over 200 conservation and outdoor recreation groups, has urged congressional leaders to find a comprehensive solution to the wildfire suppression funding issue, specifically pushing for passage of the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (WDFA), which was introduced by Representative Michael Simpson (R-ID-2) in the House (H.R.2862) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) in the Senate (S.1842).

Sources: CNN, E&E News, Library of Congress, Puerto Rico Report, U.S House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, White House Office of Management and Budget
