

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

September 8, 2019

The Honorable Mark Green
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 2004

Dear Administrator Green:

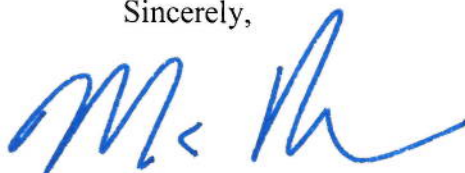
This past Friday, I traveled to the Bahamas and witnessed the destruction of Category 5 Hurricane Dorian. The devastation left behind on Abaco and Grand Bahama islands will certainly require the United States and the international community to provide strong support and assistance to aid them in their recovery.

There remains an immediate need for medical attention and communications, however, accessibility and resources are limited, and a lack of electricity continues to plague recovery efforts. Vertical-lift of those who are injured and require treatment by trained professionals is the only solution until debris is cleared and on-shore resources can be stood up. The USNS Comfort, and its crew of trained medical staff, flight deck and ability to desalinate water, would be ideal in helping the Bahamian people. While it is currently assigned to U.S. Southern Command's Area of Responsibility, the USNS Comfort, if requested, could be reassigned to the Bahamas and provide short-term medical treatment as runways and ports come back online. Additionally, the Bataan Amphibious Readiness Group, already in the area, has ships that are also capable of providing air lift and medical support.

It is critical that during this time of need for our neighbors, the United States uses all of our capabilities to continue to assist in the recovery efforts. This includes urgent efforts to save lives. As such, I respectfully implore you to strongly consider a formal request for the USNS Comfort to be repositioned to the Bahamas as soon as possible, as well as any assets needed from the Bataan Amphibious Readiness Group. I stand ready to work with you as we help the Bahamas recover from this deadly storm.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator