

Governor Pierluisi and Cabinet members participate of FEMA Tabletop Exercise

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San Juan, Puerto Rico - Today, Governor Pedro R. Pierluisi and key cabinet members participated of a tabletop exercise (TTX) from FEMA's National Exercise Division (NED), to discuss identified best practices, lessons learned, and other pertinent topic areas needed for an immediate response operation to address a no-notice emergency scenario, such as an earthquake. The exercise took place at the Puerto Rico Convention Center, predesignated alternate facility to respond to a significant or catastrophic event.

Leads for the Puerto Rico Department of Housing, Education, Family, and Health among others, joined Governor Pierluisi in the discussion that focused on preparedness actions in advance of the peak of the hurricane season, considering an earthquake that affects most of the island. The goal is to help strengthen Puerto Rico's capability to plan for, prepare and respond to challenges related to an earthquake during the hurricane season, that may escalate if another incident happens simultaneously.

Meanwhile, governor Pierluisi said that for the people of Puerto Rico "it is vital, of actual life or death importance, that all government agencies and entities work collaboratively to put in place the systems and protocols necessary to achieve an effective and coordinated emergency response. There is no doubt that when we work together, state government and federal agencies, we always achieve a better result".

"Today we continue our mission of building on this work, ensuring we are always looking for new and better ways to improve our readiness, to adopt proven best practices, and to examine ways to be quicker and more effective when disaster strikes. We are zeroing in on all actions we must be ready to take in the event of an earthquake like the one our people suffered in 2020. My administration is fully committed to putting in place all the necessary components to be able to act immediately, and that is why all our leadership is here today", Pierluisi added.



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The exercise provided an opportunity for top-level officials responsible for the safety of the island, to discuss in a non-attributive and neutral forum, homeland security policy and strategy at the state government organizational level, where they identified and addressed issues and established priorities. This is the second consecutive year that the Governor and his cabinet participate of a FEMA TTX, to reinforce the emergency management capabilities/acquired skills of each agency within their respective fields. This year the exercise was based on an earthquake scenario, as opposed to last year, where a hurricane setting was used.

“Our recent response experiences helped us review the necessary elements to organize and coordinate our emergency management posture for this season. We have a solid commitment to work along the Government of Puerto Rico, which is instrumental in the successful execution of all response and recovery efforts”, said FEMA Region 2 Administrator David Warrington. “For the last 30 years, FEMA has maintained permanent presence in the island through the FEMA Caribbean Area Office to support Puerto Rico before, during and after emergencies. CAO Coordinator Orlando “Landy” Olivera and his personnel work closely with the Governor and his staff to ensure appropriate coordination among all work stakeholders ahead of an incident, since mutual trust and respect will be essential during the next crisis.”

Commissioner Nino Correa Filomeno, from the Department of Public Safety's (DSP) PR Emergency Management Bureau (PREMB), said that “at PREMB, we work every day so that the government and citizens have their plans up to date. This type of exercise keeps us working together with FEMA and state agencies to fine tune details and provide a responsible response to our people in case of an emergency.”

The exercise offered an opportunity to discuss the integration of the Puerto Rico Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC) in coordination with the Governor’s Office, other government agencies, and the private sector to identify and prioritize critical infrastructure impacts post-earthquake. This effort gives exercise participants the opportunity to review plans, policies, and procedures, better understand evolving priorities, and identify specific decision points through a cascading events scenario.

During the exercise, the scenario included the immediate response and community stabilization phases from the time of the Earthquake to 72 hours after it happened. Then, it considered the process for sustained operations and the



recovery program delivery after 72 hours of the incident through to two (2) weeks after the event that caused major damages to critical infrastructure island wide.



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