

Heinrich pushes for hurricane recovery

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) questioned key officials on Nov. 14 during a Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources hearing on the hurricane recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The hearing included testimony from Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló and U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Kenneth Mapp, as well as representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, and the Puerto Rico Energy Commission.

During Heinrich's questioning, Rosselló framed the disaster as an opportunity to not just restore, but also modernize the island's power grid, by incorporating technologies like microgrids, renewable energy, and distributed energy resources.

The push to move from restoration to lasting improvement has also led to a bill recently cosponsored by Heinrich.

The Rebuilding Resilient Energy Systems Act would ensure that federal disaster funding could be used to build more resilient, efficient, clean, and low-cost energy systems. The bill targets critical infrastructure and directs the DOE's national labs to provide assistance in rebuilding efforts.

Heinrich has called on the Trump Administration to utilize the expertise and programs at New Mexico's national labs, like Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories, to evaluate Puerto Rico's electrical grid needs, develop a more resilient and modern power grid, and examine its

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other critical infrastructure for better disaster planning.

To find testimony, a list of witnesses, and the full webcast of the Nov. 14 hearing, visit www.energy.senate.gov

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