Across many faiths, houses of worship are often vital stakeholders in their communities, working directly to serve people in need. At the same time, the accelerating rate of natural disasters has sharply increased demand for the humanitarian support of churches and public and private partners. Confronted with flooding, wildfires, hurricanes and tornadoes, ministries across the country are dedicating more and more resources to help the most severely affected survivors.

Faith-based providers know from lived experience that a wholistic disaster-response strategy must not only fund the immediate needs of affected communities but also support long-term recovery, address the root causes of climate change, provide for a just transition to renewable energy and ensure racial and gender equity while building resilience and sustainability. As good stewards and people of faith, we are called by our foundational teachings to care for the earth and examine our behavior toward creation. As a society, we have a responsibility to address poverty and natural disasters.

WE ASK:

For these reasons and more, our shared-faith communities ask federal lawmakers to continue their leadership of and support for disaster response. Specifically, we ask them to:

- Enact policies that remedy the environmental devastation caused by accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Enhance the well-being of communities and the environment such that all are protected, now and in the future.
- Ensure that federal disaster recovery resources reach all affected survivors, especially people in low income households, seniors, people with disabilities, indigenous communities, people experiencing homelessness and migrants who live and work in host countries.
- Provide desperately needed funding to support hungry children and families in U.S. territories still recovering from hurricane damage.
- Support robust funding for national and global measures that mitigate and help people adapt to the effects of climate change, especially the marginalized and most vulnerable.

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We urge Congress to enact policies that support the transition to a carbon-neutral society, providing people with incentives to create economic growth opportunities that will both protect the environment and help eradicate poverty. Such policies must honor the fundamental rights of workers to workplace safety, job security, and fair remuneration so that neither employees nor business owners lose ground economically.

We urge Congress to fund programs providing emergency assistance in the aftermath of disasters, and to advance equitable recovery by preserving assistance to low-income households. Ensuring the long-term financial stability of the National Flood Insurance Program is critical to the work of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and other flood response partners such as ELCA ministries.

We urge Congress to immediately pass a disaster assistance package with $600 million for Puerto Rico’s Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP). As a block grant, NAP does not automatically expand or contract in response to need. Congress must allocate additional funding for NAP in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

We urge Congress to appropriate funds for adaptation and mitigation efforts such as wildlife protection, soil preservation, international aid to combat drought, and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

We thank lawmakers for their leadership and service.