



FOR RELEASE ON:

Governors Voice Support for Puerto Rico's Revitalization *Partnership announced between SSEB, Puerto Rico, and U.S. DOE*

Washington, D.C.—Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant and Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson issued a joint statement Monday morning to reaffirm their support for Puerto Rico's revitalization efforts and announce a partnership between the Southern States Energy Board (SSEB), Puerto Rico's Governor Ricardo Rosselló, and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

The Southern States Energy Board (SSEB) is a non-profit interstate compact organization with the mission to enhance economic development and the quality of life in the South through innovations in energy and environmental policies, programs, and technologies.

Gov. Bryant serves as SSEB chairman. Gov. Hutchinson preceded Bryant as chair.

"Last September, immediately prior to the 57th Annual Meeting of the Southern States Energy Board, all of us were shocked to learn the tragic and heartbreaking news that hurricanes Irma and Maria had ravaged and devastated the Island of Puerto Rico. Each day more disasters were reported in the press," said Bryant.

SSEB's annual meeting was held in Charleston, South Carolina, on Sept. 24-26, 2017, just six days after Hurricane Maria left 95 percent of the island without power.

"During our annual meeting, I sponsored a resolution urging our states and utilities to assist Puerto Rico in her time of need and pledging strategic assistance from SSEB's member governors, legislators, and Associate Members in the hardening and revitalization of the Island's energy system. The resolution was passed unanimously by our members," Gov. Hutchinson said.

According to SSEB's Executive Director, Ken Nemeth, "Puerto Rico and its citizens have the right and authority to make decisions about the future of the Island's energy utility, and SSEB will work in an open and transparent manner to develop recommendations that meet Gov. Rosselló's goals of creating a more efficient, reliable, resilient, and affordable electric system."

Gov. Bryant said he is committed to working in tandem with Gov. Rosselló and the U.S. Department of Energy to resolve critical infrastructure issues on the island.

"We are fortunate to be able to work with Gov. Rosselló and his legislative leaders on the key components that will bring a sustainable energy grid system and regulatory program to Puerto Rico. Our efforts will focus on developing well-informed, unbiased, and innovative regulatory framework models for the Puerto Rican government. SSEB and its partners possess unique, multidisciplinary capabilities and experiences working with the governments, utilities, businesses, industries, and universities of its member states and territories," Bryant said.

"In this mission, I am pleased to report that we have found a willing partner in the U.S. Department of Energy and we are indebted to U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry and his team for their gracious assistance, their technical expertise, and their enthusiastic response to support Puerto Rico. We presently are finalizing a scope of work which provides optimum value for Puerto Rico residents."

Following a call with Gov. Bryant about the project's goals, Gov. Rosselló said, "I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the support that SSEB has extended to me and the American citizens who live in Puerto Rico as we work toward a complete transformation of our electrical system. I am dedicated to working collaboratively with DOE, SSEB, and the project team."

Eddie Joe Williams, who serves as President Trump's Federal Representative to SSEB, said, "This project epitomizes the value and the strength of the Board. The enthusiasm of its members to collaborate and identify solutions to the tremendous challenges facing Puerto Rico has been evident since September, and I am delighted to learn of the U.S. Department of Energy's involvement."

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About Southern States Energy Board

The Southern States Energy Board (SSEB) is a non-profit interstate compact organization created in 1960 and established under Public Laws 87-563 and 92-440. The Board's mission is to enhance economic development and the quality of life in the South through innovations in energy and environmental policies, programs, and technologies. Sixteen southern states and two territories comprise the membership of SSEB: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia and West Virginia. Each jurisdiction is represented by the governor and a legislator from the House and Senate. A governor serves as the chair and legislators serve as vice-chair and treasurer. Ex-officio, non-voting Board members include a federal representative appointed by the President of the United States, the Southern Legislative Conference Energy and Environment Committee Chair and SSEB's executive director, who serves as secretary.

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