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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5400

April 23, 2015

Hon. Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Don Young
Chairman
Subcommittee on Indian, Insular,
and Alaska Native Affairs
House Committee on Natural Resources
1337 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Raúl Ruiz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Indian, Insular,
and Alaska Native Affairs
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, Chairman Young, and Ranking Member Ruiz:

I write to respectfully request that the full Committee on Natural Resources or the Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs hold a hearing on Puerto Rico's political status as soon as possible.

Specifically, it is my hope that the Committee or Subcommittee will invite government and non-government witnesses to testify about (1) H.R. 727, the *Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Process Act*, which I introduced on February 4, 2015, and (2) the relevant provision of Division B of P.L. 113-76, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014*, which became law on January 17, 2014.

H.R. 727 authorizes a federally-sponsored vote to be held in Puerto Rico within one year of the bill's enactment. The ballot would contain a single question: "Shall Puerto Rico be admitted as a State of the United States?" If a majority of voters affirm their desire for admission, the bill provides for an automatic series of steps to occur that would culminate in Puerto Rico being admitted as a state in January 2021.

As of this writing, H.R. 727 has 102 cosponsors. There have been approximately 1,900 bills introduced in the 114th Congress to date, and H.R. 727 has more bipartisan support than 99 percent of those bills.

For its part, P.L. 113-76 provides an appropriation of \$2.5 million to fund the first federally-sponsored status vote in Puerto Rico's history. This funding will remain available until it is expended by the Puerto Rico government. While P.L. 113-76 does not prescribe the exact format of the ballot, leaving those details to the Puerto Rico government, it does require the U.S. Department of Justice to certify that the ballot and voter education materials are consistent with U.S. law and policy. I believe this is the most important step that the federal government has ever taken to resolve the issue of Puerto Rico's political status. Unfortunately, although more than 15 months have elapsed since P.L. 113-76 became law, the Puerto Rico government has not submitted a proposed ballot to the U.S. Department of Justice or taken any meaningful action to schedule this federally-sponsored vote. It is my hope that the Committee will explore this matter in detail as part of its oversight function.

Thank you for your attention to my request.

Sincerely,



Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress