



Hon. Edwin Soto Santiago  
Alcalde

*Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*  
**Municipio de Las Marías**  
*Oficina del Alcalde*



*"El Pueblo de la China Dulce"*

August 28, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Majority  
322 Hart SOB  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer:

Warm greetings from the Municipality of Las Marías, Puerto Rico. Our town is nestled in the west region of the island, blessed with fertile lands that are conducive to agricultural production. However, Puerto Rico's heavy reliance on food imports, which account for over 85% of our consumption, leaves us acutely vulnerable to climatological or geopolitical disruptions in the food supply chain. The devastating aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017 served as a stark reminder of this vulnerability when the closure of ports left countless Puerto Ricans grappling with food insecurity. It is imperative that we address this unsustainable situation by incorporating a Puerto Rican Food Sovereignty Program in the upcoming Farm Bill.

We wholeheartedly endorse the request put forth by the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago, urging the inclusion of specific language in the new Farm Bill that designates 50% of all United States Department of Agriculture program and grant funding in Puerto Rico to be directed towards local farmers and community agricultural projects on the island. Furthermore, it is crucial that the Puerto Rican Food Sovereignty Program be fully functional in Puerto Rican Spanish, ensuring that small-scale and community farmers can directly avail themselves of these programs in a manner that respects their cultural and linguistic needs. By incorporating such provisions in the new Farm Bill, Puerto Rico can take significant strides towards achieving the food sovereignty it so desperately requires.

Within Municipality of Las Marías, we are fortunate to have dedicated farmers representing various agricultural sectors. By enacting a food sovereignty clause for Puerto Rico in the Farm Bill, we not only empower our farmers but also foster the economic development of Municipality of Las Marías and the entire west region of the island.

Therefore, we firmly stand in support of the inclusion of the Puerto Rican Food Sovereignty Program in the new Farm Bill. We express our deepest gratitude for your attention to this pressing matter and eagerly anticipate your affirmative response in endorsing this vital initiative.

Sincerely,

  
Edwin Soto Santiago  
Mayor

*"Al servicio del pueblo marieño"*

P.O. Box 366 Las Marías, Puerto Rico 00670-0366 Tels. (787)827-2280/2940/3220, Fax (787)827-2021



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August 28, 2023

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
Russell SOB  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Minority Leader McConnell:

Warm greetings from the Municipality of Las Marías, Puerto Rico. Our town is nestled in the west region of the island, blessed with fertile lands that are conducive to agricultural production. However, Puerto Rico's heavy reliance on food imports, which account for over 85% of our consumption, leaves us acutely vulnerable to climatological or geopolitical disruptions in the food supply chain. The devastating aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017 served as a stark reminder of this vulnerability when the closure of ports left countless Puerto Ricans grappling with food insecurity. It is imperative that we address this unsustainable situation by incorporating a Puerto Rican Food Sovereignty Program in the upcoming Farm Bill.

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August 28, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the House  
2468 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy:

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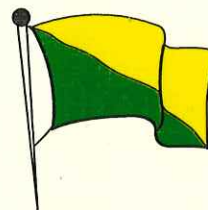
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August 28, 2023

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
House Minority Leader  
2433 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Minority Leader Jeffries:

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