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April 21, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
State Capitol Building  
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As members of the NYC congressional delegation, we write regarding disaster relief for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where tens of thousands of people are in humanitarian need due to multiple eruptions of the La Soufrière volcano.

After the first eruption of La Soufrière on April 9, up to 20,000 people out of a total population of 110,000 were evacuated from the island of Saint Vincent in search of safety. Water shortages have resulted from the contamination of waterways caused by falling ash and dust in the streets. Roofs of houses have collapsed under the weight of ash, which has blanketed the island. Electricity and food supplies have been disrupted. Thousands of locals remain in emergency shelters.

Caribbean leaders in Brooklyn and Queens, which are home to likely the largest Vincentian diaspora community in the U.S., have collected relief supplies to provide to Saint Vincent. The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Disaster Relief Committee, for example, reported they have collected enough bottled water to fill two 20-foot shipping containers, 90 commercial shipping bins, 120 barrels and two 20-foot containers of essential relief items. Shipping these materials by sea would take roughly three weeks or longer. Alternatively, sending an aircraft with supplies would deliver relief much sooner during this rapidly unfolding crisis.

We therefore respectfully request your assistance in securing an available aircraft to airlift disaster relief supplies procured from private citizens from New York City to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. These citizens would greatly appreciate help with the delivery. We are prepared to work with you to coordinate efforts for an aircraft and we welcome your partnership.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration. We are available to answer any additional questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Hakeem Jeffries in black ink.

Hakeem Jeffries  
U.S. Representative

Handwritten signature of Gregory W. Meeks in blue ink.

Gregory W. Meeks  
U.S. Representative