



February 12, 2016

DEAR INDUSTRY PARTNERS:

After careful deliberation, and close monitoring of the spread of the disease in the Caribbean region, travel related cases, and taking into account the measures and declarations issued by the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico decided to declare a public health state of emergency on the Island. This will provide Puerto Rico access to federal emergency funding to combat the spread of the Zika virus and protect the health of all Puerto Ricans and our visitors. It also allows for interagency support in mitigation efforts, such as tire and debris collection throughout the Island. In summary, Puerto Rico is a secure and prepared destination and is working very proactively and aggressively with the Zika virus.

Since December 2015, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has been issuing an Alert: Level 2 for several Caribbean destinations due to the on-going transmission of the Zika virus. On February 1st, the World Health Organization declared a global public health emergency due to the fast spread of the disease, its link to cases of microcephaly and other birth defects, and the potential causal link to the Guillain-Barre syndrome.

The government's determination to declare a public health state of emergency was not taken lightly or precipitously. Before this decision, a governmental interagency committee, which includes PRTC and representatives from the private sector, was created to coordinate efforts to educate the public on prevention, and safeguard the health of residents and visitors on the Island. The on-going efforts include an educational/awareness component which comprises information material and seminars, online resources, social media, press conferences and official periodic reports on Zika cases and any new developments regarding the transmission, symptoms and effects of the disease. So far, up until today, there have been 31 confirmed cases; the prevention and awareness efforts have helped keep this number relatively low. There is also a mosquito control component which includes, the detection of mosquito-breeding sites, fumigation, and other action aiming to minimize, as much as possible, the Island's mosquito population.

Once again, we emphasize there is no need for panic, and urge all members of the hospitality industry to continue with your own efforts in mitigating the spread of the mosquito in your premises, and keeping your guests informed on prevention measures, while providing the quality service that Puerto Rico is known for.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,



Ingrid I. Rivera Rocafort
Executive Director