

# Memorandum



**Date:** January 5, 2021  
**To:** Honorable Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners  
**From:** Daniella Levine Cava  
Mayor  
*Daniella Levine Cava*  
**Subject:** Leave Donations to the Earthquake Relief Efforts in Puerto Rico and Wildfire Relief Efforts in Australia - Directive 200194

Agenda Item No. 2(B)(7)  
January 20, 2021

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On Tuesday, February 4, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Resolution No. R-160-20, sponsored by Chairwoman Audrey M. Edmonson, to allow County employees to donate the value of accrued holiday and annual leave time to the County’s Emergency Disaster Relief Fund for use towards earthquake relief efforts in Puerto Rico and wildfire relief efforts in Australia. The resolution further directed the County Mayor or County Mayor’s designee to evaluate options for the donated funds and provide a recommendation to the Board. At that time, as customary, an appeal to County employees went out asking them to consider donating their accrued Annual or Holiday leave to this cause. Collectively, employees donated over 200 hours to these causes.

### **Background on Puerto Rico Earthquake**

On January 7, 2020, the Island of Puerto Rico experienced a 6.4-magnitude earthquake and multiple aftershocks immediately thereafter. The impact from this earthquake was felt far and wide. It triggered widespread power outages and damages, which left schools, homes and other structures crumbled along the southern coastline of Puerto Rico, as well as individuals homeless and in need of basic necessities.

### **Background on Australia Wildfire**

The Australia wildfire stretched from June of 2019 to March of 2020 and devastated a significant portion of the country. It scorched an estimated 46 million acres, destroyed more than 5,900 buildings (including 2,770 homes), and killed over 30 people. Although wildfires are common in Australia during this period, the scale of last season’s fires were unprecedented, and the implications are still being felt as recovery efforts continue.

### **Recommendation**

In accordance with Resolution No. R-160-20, I authorized the following employee contributions of earned annual and holiday leave time for the purpose listed below based on the total net amount Miami-Dade County employees donated.

- **Puerto Rico Earthquake Relief - \$3,663.39**
- **Australia Wildfire Relief - \$2,575.35**

I believe that it is important to provide contributions where they will have the most impact to those affected by these disasters. Of the various organizations that provided assistance and continue to, the American and Australian Red Cross, The Salvation Army and The Society of St. Vincent de Paul have been very effective in responding to the various needs resulting from the Puerto Rico Earthquake and the Australian Wildfire relief. These organizations are experienced in responding to disasters of these kinds and have the resources and infrastructure to respond on an international scale.

Additionally, the resolution directed the administration to collect and distribute contributions of money, clothing, household goods and other supplies; however, due to the onset of COVID-19 and the scale back of activities in the Stephen P. Clark Center and other County locations, this was not realized.

I would like to recognize and thank our County employees who generously donated their personal leave to the Puerto Rico Earthquake Relief and the Australia Wildfire Relief funds and made these donations possible.

Pursuant to Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda. Should you require any information regarding the donations, please contact Edward Marquez, Chief Financial Officer, at 305-375-1451.

c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, Successor County Attorney  
Office of the Mayor, Senior Staff  
Arleene Cuellar, Director, Human Resources Department  
Melissa Adames, Director, Clerk of the Board  
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