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Alaska Division of Insurance Assists Southern Neighbors in Puerto Rico

March 16, 2018 ANCHORAGE – Alex Romero, chief investigator for the Alaska Division of Insurance, returned this week after spending a month in San Juan, Puerto Rico assisting the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OCS) of Puerto Rico with insurance payment recovery. Settlement recovery from insurance companies is deemed vital to Puerto Rico’s rebuilding efforts and the health and safety of its residents.

“We are proud to have had Alex representing Alaska on this assignment—Puerto Rico Insurance Commissioner Javier Rivera Rios and the NAIC staff were sorry to see him go,” said Lori Wing-Heier, director of the Alaska Division of Insurance. “His fluency in Spanish as well as his 14 years of experience working in U.S. embassies in Latin America made him a perfect fit for this special project.”

While in Puerto Rico, Mr. Romero served as the team leader of the five National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)-sponsored regulators assigned to the Puerto Rico OCS. The team assisted citizens in handling their insurance claim complaints and appeals; on average, the team responded to 150 calls and filed 35 complaints per day. Mr. Romero also applied his Alaska-based expertise to develop a streamlined work process that was adopted by the Puerto Rico OCS to increase productivity for taking calls and for filling and following-up on complaints.

Nearly five months after hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the island of Puerto Rico, basic infrastructure has still not been restored to the region. Puerto Ricans continue to endure blackouts, inconsistent cell service, and lack of access to clean drinking water. After receiving an influx of consumer complaints related to insurance claims, the Insurance Commissioner of Puerto Rico requested assistance from the NAIC. Mr. Romero was selected to be part of the second wave of NAIC-sponsored insurance regulators dispatched to Puerto Rico to assist with delays in communication, handling, and payment of insurance claims.

The Division of Insurance is an agency housed within the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) tasked with protecting consumers in Alaska. For additional information about the division, visit <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ins/>. For information about DCCED and its other agencies, visit commerce.alaska.gov.

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ATTACHED: photo of Alex Romero (right) with Javier Rivera Rios, Insurance Commissioner of Puerto Rico

