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Puerto Rico private sector demands consumer representation at power company

By Caribbean Business on September 17, 2018



SAN JUAN – Major private sector organizations expressed concern in a joint statement Monday about the delay in appointing a consumer representative to the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (Prepa) board, whose candidate filing process ended Aug. 31.

“The chair that represents all sectors and consumers of electricity in the Board of PREPA, including the productive sector of the country, is vacant. Consumers need to be represented so that the PREPA Board has legitimacy before the country,” said Rodrigo Masses, president of the Manufacturers Association.

For his part, Dr. Jorge Argüelles Morán, president of the United Retailers Association, said: “Electricity is the most important issue at this time. Many business people were forced to close their businesses due to a prolonged absence of electricity. Lacking a consumer representative within the Prepa Board takes eliminates our trust in the processes that are taking place, according to the needs of business people who depend on Prepa for electric service.”

Manuel Reyes, the executive vice president of the Chamber of Food Marketing, Industry & Distribution (MIDA by its Spanish acronym), said the seat must be filled immediately for the utility board to regain credibility. “Delaying this process hurts us all. The process must end already to focus on the reconstruction of the [electric] system,” he said.

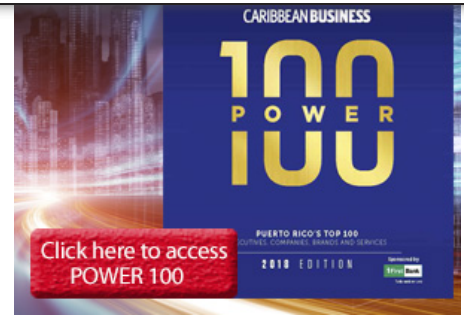
For his part, Kenneth Rivera, president of the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce, said, “We must leave aside postures and positions that detract credibility from our institutions. The process must be completed as quickly as possible so...business owners and energy consumers, in general, have a representative in the most important Board of Puerto Rico at the most crucial historical moment.”

On the other hand, José Guzmán, president of the Puerto Rico Renewable Energy Contractors & Consultants Association (Aconer by its Spanish acronym) said: “We cannot have a PREPA Board devoid of consumer representation. We now need a representative to promote a change in the culture of PREPA in favor of the consumer.”

“This is a very serious issue, delaying it creates uncertainty in terms of PREPA processes. The election or the certification of the representative, if there was only one candidate, should proceed. Changing the rules in the middle of the process raises serious doubts,” said José Salvatella, president of the Puerto Rico Restaurants Association (Asore by its Spanish acronym).

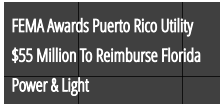
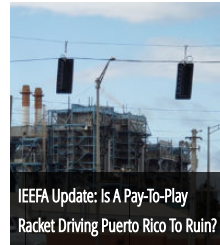
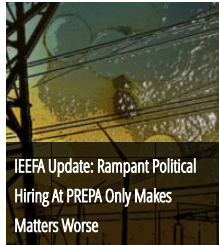
The organizations reiterated that they concur that not completing or otherwise altering the process raises doubts about the public corporation’s governance, which already included the” resignation of its chairman and other members of its Board barely a few months ago and today does not have a consumer representative,” the release reads.





PREPA

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