

Charlie Papavizas Weighs in on Shipping Restrictions to Puerto Rico Following Hurricane Maria

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Maritime & Admiralty Practice Chair Charlie Papavizas was quoted in *USA Today's* "[Why Puerto Rico Is Being Denied Shipping Deliveries of Fuel](#)" published on September 27. The article addresses the request by members of Congress to the Trump administration to suspend shipping restrictions that would allow more fuel and emergency supplies to reach Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria.

After Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, The Jones Act was suspended from September 8 through September 22 to allow shipments to Texas and Florida, which also included Puerto Rico. Since the suspension, the administration has not issued a new waiver for Puerto Rico, resulting in significant fuel shortages for an island that heavily relies on diesel for much of its power.

In the article, Charlie notes that Jones Act waivers before 2005 were typically granted for specific vessels, not for general purposes such as a fuel shortage. But more general waivers have been granted since then for hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Sandy, and Irma.

"I do not believe there is any precedent at all for waiving the Jones Act for general purposes. There has to be a national defense justification by law for a waiver, and the only economic related national defense justification acceptable to date—since at least 1950—has been related to regional fuel shortages," Charlie said.

Charlie focuses his practice on administrative, legislative, and finance matters, primarily in the maritime industry. He frequently consults on the application of U.S.-flag laws and regulations, particularly the application of U.S. coastwise laws (Jones Act) to cargo, passenger, and vessel movements and investments in U.S. companies.

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