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PRESS RELEASE

Cmr. George P. Bush: Texas GLO awards more than \$31 million in first round of flood mitigation grants

Four repeatedly flooded communities are the first recipients of historic mitigation funding

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AUSTIN — Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved \$31,426,781 in flood mitigation projects in the first round of grant funding for the GLO's \$2.3 billion regional mitigation competitions. Hidalgo County will be granted \$9,858,499 for phase one of the main floodwater channel expansion project and the city of Penitas will receive \$4,075,137 for the Tom Gill Rd Flood Mitigation improvements project. The city of La Marque will receive \$7,493,145 for a citywide wastewater collection system project and the city of Raymondville will be granted \$10 million for drainage and wastewater system improvements to reduce the risk of repetitive flooding.

"Texas is known as a wonderful place to call home, but we must continue to protect our communities against natural disasters such as flooding and hurricane force winds," said Commissioner Bush. "These coastal area communities have experienced tremendous repetitive storm damage. The mitigation funds awarded by the GLO will provide vital fortification against future storm damage."

The GLO received a historic \$4.3 billion allocation in Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to mitigate against future damage from hurricanes, flooding and other natural disasters in repetitively damaged areas. Within the \$2.3 billion set aside for regional mitigation awards, \$46,096,950 was allocated to the 2015 Floods State Mitigation Competition, with 50% going to the HUD- and state-designated Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) areas. HUD requires at least 50% of the total \$4.3 billion must be spent on activities benefiting low- to moderate-income (LMI) populations. Of the 426,150 residents benefiting from the announced grants, 229,271 or 53.8% are LMI.

For the 2015 Floods HUD-MID Competition, the GLO received 13 applications representing a total request of \$111,276,649.27. For the 2015 Floods State-MID Competition, the GLO received 18 applications representing a total request of \$137,566,869.64. The grantees announced represent the highest scoring applications meeting program eligibility requirements based on the 2015 Floods State Mitigation

Competition [Applicant Scoring and Eligibility Competition Criteria](#) and the CDBG-MIT Action Plan. Hidalgo County and the city of Penitas are HUD-MID eligible entities, while the cities of La Marque and Raymondville are in counties designated state-MID areas. The remaining funds allocated to these two competitions will be announced as the competition continues through the eligibility process.

Hidalgo County Main Floodwater Channel Expansion Project - Phase 1

Hidalgo County has experienced six flooding disaster declarations in five years, with saturation of the Main Floodwater Channel identified as the main source. All stormwater in Hidalgo County ultimately outfalls to the Gulf of Mexico through either the Main Floodwater Channel or the Arroyo Colorado Floodway. Expansion of the Main Floodwater Channel due to the greater regional benefit. The proposed project involves expanding 3.3 miles of the existing Main Floodwater Channel from an average of 150 feet to, more than doubling its capacity, a width of 350 - 400 feet. Expanding the Main Floodwater Channel will create additional outfall capacity to hundreds of existing and future local drainage systems. This project is estimated to benefit nearly 400,000 residents with more than 53% being LMI.

City of Penitas Tom Gill Rd Flood Mitigation Project

The proposed project will be designed to mitigate impacts from severe weather events, which historically cause severe flooding in the entire city. The City's Tom Gill Road areas of development continuously experiences flooding during heavy rains due to undersized and congested drainage swales. The proposed project of an updated roadway and drainage system along the Tom Gill Road corridor and adjacent subdivisions will address higher year rainfall events and reduce flooding. This combined with Hidalgo County's upgrading of the drainage system near this area will improve stormwater conveyance in the area. The project will benefit 4,550 individuals, 57% of which are LMI.

City of La Marque drainage improvements

With these grant funds, the city of La Marque will improve its wastewater collection system, which consists of sanitary sewer manholes, pipes and lift stations. The upgrades will minimize the inflow of floodwaters into the wastewater collection system, protect resident's homes from sewage backup, and ensure the wastewater treatment system will operate within acceptable range during flood event. Mitigating the effects of sewage overflow into the streets and resident homes are paramount to the effectiveness of the stable collection system. This project will directly benefit 15,105 residents with nearly 54% qualifying as LMI.

City of Raymondville drainage improvements

The city of Raymondville will increase the resiliency and capacity of the drainage system, allowing storm water to flow off-site faster, thereby alleviating future flooding potential and damage to roads and critical facilities. The proposed project will provide significant enhancements to several areas throughout the city by increasing storage in detention areas and diverting overflows into the North Raymondville Drain. Drainage ditch improvements will increase storage capacity on outflow ditches surrounding Raymondville on the south, west and north areas of the city. A major trunk line will drain the southside area into existing ditches. Upon completion, this drainage project will hasten the flow of stormwater runoff away from the city, restore resiliency, and

reduce the risk to public health and safety. This project will directly benefit nearly 8,700 residents, with 66% identified to be LMI.

“Every day the GLO is working to cut red-tape and move much-needed federal recovery dollars to communities to improve infrastructure, mitigate against future flooding events, and protect both the homes and lives of Texans,” said Commissioner Bush.

Announcements for the 2016 and Hurricane Harvey Mitigation Competitions will be announced in the coming months.

Background:

In May 2020, Commissioner George P. Bush announced the kick-off of the application process for the first round of more than \$2.3 billion for mitigation projects to protect Texas communities hit by Hurricane Harvey and severe flooding in 2015 and 2016.

During the first round, the GLO is conducting three (3) competitive application programs from the [CDBG-MIT Action Plan](#) (see eligibility maps below). HUD-MID and state-MID areas each received half of the program’s allocation. Those programs include:

1. 2015 Floods State Mitigation Competition (\$46,096,950 total - \$23,048,475 per HUD and state MID) [2015 Eligible Counties Map](#)
2. 2016 Floods State Mitigation Competition (\$147,680,760 total - \$73,840,380 per HUD and state MID) [2016 Eligible Counties Map](#)
3. Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition Round 1 (\$1 billion of \$2,144,776,720 total - \$500,000,000 per HUD and state MID) [Hurricane Harvey Eligible Counties Map](#)

Applications closed for the first round of funding October 28, 2020, and the GLO is currently evaluating all applications in accordance with the established scoring criteria. Eligible applications with the highest scores will be announced as finalized.

For the 2015 and 2016 Floods State Mitigation Competitions, each separate competition will provide funds to cities, counties, Indian Tribes, and councils of governments (COG) to address risks in the 2015 and 2016 Floods HUD and State MID areas. Examples of projects include flood control and drainage improvements, infrastructure improvements, green infrastructure, public facilities, and buyouts. Each proposed project must have a total proposed cost between \$3 million to \$10 million.

The Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition will fund mitigation projects for Hurricane Harvey HUD- and state-designated Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) areas. The competition is open to cities, counties, COGs, state entities, and special purpose districts. Examples of projects include flood control and drainage improvements, infrastructure improvements, green infrastructure, public facilities, and buyouts. Each proposed project must have a total proposed cost between \$3 million to \$100 million.

HUD defines mitigation as activities that increase resilience to disasters and reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, and suffering and hardship, by lessening the impact of future disasters.

The State of Texas CDBG Mitigation Action Plan: Building Stronger for a Resilient Future outlines the use of funds, programs, eligible applicants, and eligibility criteria. The plan was sent to HUD on February 3, 2020, after an extraordinary public outreach effort including a 50-day public comment period, which far-surpassed HUD requirements by hosting eight public hearings - three public hearings prior to the completion of the draft plan and five following publication of the draft plan. HUD rules

only required two public hearings prior to the draft plan and two following the publication of the draft plan. The plan was approved by HUD March 31, 2020. To learn more visit recovery.texas.gov/mitigation.