

Regional Airport Rehabilitation Is Underway with Million-dollar FEMA Allocation

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded over \$1.7 million for the repair of regional airports throughout the Island. The funds are destined for permanent repairs in the airports of Aguadilla, Ceiba, Culebra, Mayagüez and San Juan (Isla Grande).

According to the Puerto Rico Ports Authority, passenger activity between all regional airports-including those in Ponce and Humacao- reached over 1.2 million travelers between 2018 and 2019, prior to the start of the flight restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In comparison, from 2020 to 2021, over 863,000 visitors have been registered.

“This network is an essential part of Puerto Rico's tourism industry and is our first impression for many travelers visiting the island, for example, from Aguadilla International Airport. That is why it is important that these facilities are in peak condition and to be more competitive as a tourist destination,” said Puerto Rico Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, José G. Baquero.

The Agency allocated close to \$164,00 to Rafael Hernández International Airport in Aguadilla for security work directed towards compliance with the Federal Aviation Administration Agency regulations, and close to \$430,900 for the architectural and engineering studies that precedes construction and remodeling works.

“Complying with the regulatory and safety standards of the Federal Aviation Administration is a priority for Governor Pedro Pierluisi and the Ports Authority. Certainly the FEMA funds allocated for the reconstruction of our airport facilities are crucial for them to continue complying with FAA requirements, but also to continue positively impacting the economic development of the municipalities where they are located, as well as their surrounding areas,” said Joel A. Pizá



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Batiz, executive director of the Puerto Rico Ports Authority.

Located on the previous facilities of the United States Airforce's Ramey Airport, the regional airport of Aguadilla provides direct weekly flights in both directions to the Dominican Republic and the cities of Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, New York, Newark and Philadelphia. It is the regional airport with most passenger traffic, almost 130,000 people between 2020 and 2021, and has approximately 400 employees.

"Aguadilla's Rafael Hernández International Airport is the second largest airport facility on the island in terms of passengers, with the longest runway in the Caribbean. FEMA funds allocated to this airport are extremely important for the safety of the thousands of passengers who use it and the hundreds of people who work here," said José A. Riollano, director of the Ports Authority's Aviation Bureau and airport manager.

Likewise, obligations approved for architectural and engineering studies at other regional airports include over \$401,000 for the Fernando Ribas Dominicki Airport in Isla Grande, nearly \$132,000 for the José Aponte de la Torre Airport in Ceiba, and over \$88,000 for the Fernando Ribas Dominicki Regional Airport in Culebra.

On the other hand, \$147,000 were approved for the Eugenio María de Hostos Airport in Mayagüez for works on the security of the perimeter that protect this important installation. Regional airports provide a network of air access that supports the local tourism industry between Mayagüez, Aguadilla, San Juan and the east coast of the island, including the island municipalities of Vieques and Culebra.

On his part, engineer Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, the Executive Director of the Central Office of Recovery, Reconstruction, and Resiliency (COR3), highlighted that infrastructure is the foundation for the economic development of Puerto Rico. "Currently, in COR3 we have disbursed approximately \$4 million for these works and we will continue providing assistance in the formalities related associated with reconstruction through which the diverse economic sectors are strengthened", Laboy Rivera added.

For more information on Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane María, please visit fema.gov/es/disaster/4339 and recuperacion.pr. Follow our social media pages at



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San Juan, Puerto Rico (May 4, 2021) – FEMA approved funds for architectural and engineering studies at several regional airports that include over \$401,000 for the Fernando Ribas Dominicci Airport in Isla Grande, nearly \$132,000 for the José Aponte de la Torre Airport in Ceiba, and over \$88,000 for the Fernando Ribas Dominicci Regional Airport in Culebra. FEMA/Eduardo Martínez





Aguadilla, Puerto Rico (August 2, 2021) – FEMA allocated close to \$164,00 to Rafael Hernández International Airport in Aguadilla for security work directed towards compliance with the Federal Aviation Administration Agency regulations, and close to \$430,900 for the architectural and engineering studies that precedes construction and remodeling works. FEMA/Lorraine Valle



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