FEMA Explains Processes for Island's Power Grid Projects

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Guaynabo, Puerto Rico –The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working closely with the Government of Puerto Rico, the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3), the Puerto Rico Energy Bureau (PREB) and the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) to move forward with projects to transform the island's electrical system. PREPA has an obligation of over $9.4 billion for these efforts, which represents the largest allocation of funds in FEMA's history.

Currently, there are 77 PREPA projects reflected in the portal used by FEMA to formulate projects and perform all related functions prior to the approval of specific projects. At the moment, PREPA is working on the designs and pre-designs to repair substations, transmission lines and PREPA buildings throughout the island. In order for these projects to move to the FEMA evaluation phase, however, PREPA must first provide scopes of work that further detail how the work will be performed.

Regarding the next steps once the scopes of work are received, FEMA's Director of External Affairs in Puerto Rico, Juan Andrés Muñoz Torres, explained that "from here, the Agency evaluates so that that all federal environmental and historic preservation laws are enforced."

"In addition, FEMA identifies possible opportunities to prevent similar damage in the future through our Hazard Mitigation Grant Program," he added, while emphasizing that the Agency's goal is to help these projects become tangible construction for the benefit of all Puerto Ricans.

In 2020, FEMA announced the FEMA Accelerated Awards Strategy (FAASt), which allows critical infrastructure projects to be grouped together in order to expedite energy grid work in Puerto Rico. "This initiative is innovative and allows us to evaluate projects along the way, forging new paths in the island's unprecedented recovery."

Likewise, all projects that PREPA submits to FEMA must have the approval of PREB, which is the entity in charge of regulating and supervising the island's energy industry. The first project approvals by PREB occurred this past June.

To date, PREPA has not requested any reimbursement of funds to COR3 for incurred costs related to permanent work.

To access more information on the recovery of Puerto Rico from Hurricane María, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339 and recuperacion.pr. Follow us on social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and Twitter @COR3pr.