

More than \$108 Million in Mitigation Funds for Hurricane Fiona Projects

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San Juan, Puerto Rico — To learn from past experiences and apply those lessons to avoid reoccurring problems, is the main drive for FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Program. To date, FEMA has approved more than **\$108 million** for eligible mitigation projects due to Hurricane Fiona, to reduce disaster risks from future events in several communities of Puerto Rico.

“FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Program is a key element of our reconstruction efforts because the projects will result in a stronger and more resilient Puerto Rico in the face of future natural or atmospheric events. These agility with which we have been able to advance such projects after Hurricane Fiona is a testament to the collaborative work between our government and FEMA for the benefit of the American citizens on the Island,” said [Pedro R. Pierluisi](#), Governor of Puerto Rico.

FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) programs provide funding for eligible mitigation activities that protect life and property from future disaster damage to build a more resilient nation. The Government of Puerto Rico manages the Hazard Mitigation 406 grant under funding provided for in the Stafford Act, through the Public Assistance Program, if mitigation measures are deemed cost-effective, eligible, and technically feasible.

“So far, Mitigation program specialists have identified 1,109 Public Assistance projects that include at least a Hazard Mitigation Proposal (HMP), which represents 95% of all projects. The total estimated cost for these projects is more than **\$231 million**. But more importantly, these represent thousands of opportunities for our communities to protect life and property, and to become more resilient for the next incident,” said Robert Little, FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer for Hurricane Fiona.

A great example is the mitigation project for the water filtration plant Antonio Santiago Vázquez better known as Superacueducto in Barrio Bajadero, Arecibo. A **\$4.9 million** project that includes **\$2.7 million** in hazard mitigation measures to



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address the spillway erosion caused by Hurricane Fiona, will strengthen the plant's resilience to future disasters.

A significant component of the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewage Authority, this filtration plant produces 100 million gallons of water per day (mgd) from which 65 million gallons are distributed to the metropolitan area. This system serves potable water to approximately **600,000** residents in its route from Arecibo to other eight (8) municipalities on the north coast and eastern region of the island.

As a result of Fiona, the Río Grande de Arecibo's water level rose to a height of 12 feet, surpassing the spillway's overflow level, which is situated on the north side of the regulating lake and supplies the plant's pumps. To address this situation, sheet piling will be installed on the shore of the regulating lake dam and restore it to its original condition.

Furthermore, the project aims to protect this critical essential service and took into consideration the balance between emergency safety and natural resources. It raised environmental concerns for which FEMA provided recommendations on how to manage and safeguard the habitat of two endangered Puerto Rico endemic species of this area: the *Atlantea tulita* (known as the Harlequin Butterfly or Quebradillana) and the *Epicrates inornatus* (known as the Puerto Rican Boa).

The recovery process from Hurricane Fiona in Puerto Rico remains consistent with **1,773** projects approved, totaling over **\$737 million** in FEMA Public Assistance (PA) program funds to address emergency and permanent projects for damaged infrastructure in the Island. These obligated funds, along with the **\$649 million** in Individual Assistance that FEMA provided to survivors, totals **\$1.3 billion** which has supported recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, since Hurricane Fiona affected it almost 19 months ago.

To learn more about Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane Fiona, please visit: www.fema.gov/disaster/4671 and for the Hazard Mitigation Program, visit: [Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants | FEMA.gov](http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation)

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