FEMA Approves Panama City Beach for $1.4 Million Mitigation Grant

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PENSACOLA, Fla. – FEMA has approved a grant of $1,428,407 for the city of Panama City Beach to make stormwater drainage improvements on a section of Alf Coleman Road between Panama City Beach Parkway (U.S. Highway 98) and Hutchinson Boulevard.

Funding from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) was approved in response to a proposal by the city after Hurricane Michael in 2018. The project is designed to correct the repetitive flooding that can make the roadway impassable for local residents and emergency vehicles.

Construction will include the elevation of 3,100 linear feet of the surface of Alf Coleman Road and the addition of new drainage structures underneath it, which are intended to provide the necessary protection against future flooding and damage.

The HMGP is an important source of federal disaster assistance. Program funding may become available after the president declares a major disaster, with a goal of strengthening communities by improving buildings and critical infrastructure. A 2018 report by the National Institute of Building Sciences found that one dollar spent on hazard mitigation saves more than six dollars of recovery and rebuilding costs.

Generally, the HMGP may provide a state, tribe or territory with additional grants up to 15 percent of the total disaster grants awarded by FEMA for a federally declared disaster. States such as Florida that meet advanced mitigation planning criteria may qualify for a higher percentage.

Florida has a FEMA-approved Enhanced Mitigation Plan, making the state eligible for HMGP funding not to exceed 20 percent of the estimated total amount of grant money spent by FEMA in the Hurricane Michael disaster. From this amount, the HMGP reimburses the state up to 75 percent of eligible costs for hazard mitigation projects. The remaining amount comes from other sources such as state and local

assets and a combination of cash and in-kind sources.