

FEMA Awards Utility Board of City of Key West \$5.59 Million to Protect Water Crossing Transmission Poles

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FEMA

ORLANDO, Fla. – FEMA has approved a grant of **\$5,595,016** for the Utility Board of the City of Key West to protect the structural steel inside concrete utility poles from damage by future storms.

Funding from FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) was approved in response to a proposal by Keys Energy Services after Hurricane Irma in 2017. The grant will help pay for protection from corrosion due to water and salt air for 119 water crossing transmission poles near the north end of the Seven Mile Bridge in Marathon Key, resulting in a more resilient electrical grid for southern Monroe County.

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 Irma 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.

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