

Over \$40 Million from FEMA to Repair Water Infrastructure

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Guaynabo, Puerto Rico – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded over \$40 million to the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (PRASA) to repair infrastructure and replace equipment damaged by Hurricane María that is intended to provide water management and services for several communities on the island.

“These renovations will greatly improve the quality of life and health of many communities. Municipalities will be able to prevent or reduce sewage overflows along their roads and PRASA will have the resources to ensure that drinking water meets local and federal standards,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator José G. Baquero.

FEMA allocated over \$37 million to repair a trunk sewer that originates in Isabela, passes through Aguadilla, Moca and Aguada, and reaches Rincón. The Isabela-Aguada sanitary trunk sewer, which provides wastewater services to over 18,000 residents, is approximately 10 kilometers long, with pipes ranging from 21 to 54 inches in diameter.

This project will be carried out with a non-invasive technology known as Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP), which consists of covering the inside of the pipe with a polyester or fiberglass lining. “It is a method that does not require excavation, which minimizes the possible impact on traffic due to these works and extends its useful life for about 50 years,” said PRASA Executive President Doriel Pagán.

To date, PRASA has successfully used CIPP technology to repair other sanitary pipes in areas such as Guayama, Ponce, Carolina and Loíza.

Meanwhile, PRASA's Caguas Central Laboratory also received an allocation of over \$3 million to replace various analysis and testing equipment. This facility is the main water testing plant on the island and performs over 200,000 sampling tests each year for the benefit of the Authority's 1.4 million customers.



FEMA

Page 1 of 3

“Continuous sampling allows us to calibrate the plant’s operation and thus be able to confirm compliance with all applicable federal and state drinking water laws and regulations,” Pagán said.

The equipment to be replaced includes an incubator, laboratory freezers, centrifuges and environmental chambers, among others. Its function is to analyze samples of both drinking water and sanitary sewage to validate the compliance of each treatment plant’s processes with regulatory parameters.

This equipment benefits PRASA’s operation because it allows it to perform and expand the number of water quality tests performed at the corporation, which minimizes the need to resort to private laboratories. “We are already in the process of purchasing, installing and calibrating the specialized water quality analysis equipment,” said the executive president.

This obligation is part of the over \$33.6 million that the agency has granted PRASA for the Central Laboratory, whose construction is in its final phase. For this project being developed in the city of Caguas, the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3) has reimbursed over \$20.6 million.

COR3 Executive Director Manuel A. Laboy Rivera explained that “the PRASA team that is leading the reconstruction and modernization of the aqueduct system is doing an excellent job, making way for the reconstruction of several of its facilities with FEMA funds.”

Laboy added that “many of these works have been carried out through the Working Capital Advance (WCA) pilot program, through which PRASA has received \$241.1 million. Of this, over \$10 million corresponds to six permanent works for which the public corporation has requested the second WCA advance for a total of 50 percent of the funds allocated by the federal agency for these projects.”

To date, FEMA has awarded nearly \$31.5 billion for about 10,900 projects to address Puerto Rico’s recovery. Of this, over \$3.6 billion were approved for PRASA through FEMA’s Accelerated Award Strategy (FAASt) to repair water distribution and treatment facilities throughout Puerto Rico.



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