

\$10.4 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Jackson County

Funds to improve drainage, sewer, and water infrastructure approved for Jackson County and the cities of Ganado and La Ward

AUSTIN - Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst, Mayor William R. Koch and Mayor Pro-Tem Blake Petrash announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved \$10.4 million in flood mitigation projects to improve drainage, sewer and water infrastructure in the majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas of Jackson County and the cities of Ganado and La Ward.

“There are many areas along the Texas coast, like Jackson County, that have a real need for new infrastructure, but have never had access to the funding they need,” said Commissioner Bush. “My team at the GLO has worked diligently within the federal rules established by HUD to ensure all of the communities that experience repetitive flooding have an opportunity to address the tremendous challenges their regions face.”

“In previous downpours and now in the last three days of rainfall, the city of La Ward has had flooding of streets and water within inches of some houses due to the city’s slow drainage,” said William R. Koch, mayor of LaWard. “With this \$3.2 million grant we are receiving from Commissioner George P. Bush and the Texas General Land Office, we will be able to dig a new drainage channel to increase water flow that the present city ditches cannot handle, add new culverts to decrease the backing-up of water near houses, and low-lying streets will be raised.

“Due to our aging infrastructure, including water and sewer lines that have been in the ground since the 1950’s, we are in desperate need of replacing and repairing lines. With our limited budget and resources, we can only do a few small projects at a time, said Blake Petrash, mayor pro-tem of Ganado. The \$7.1 million in funding we’re receiving from Commissioner George P. Bush and the Texas General Land Office will replace and improve our water infrastructure and sanitary sewer lines which better ensures the future safety of our residents. We are very thankful to have been awarded this grant and look forward to getting this project started.

Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) offered her support for the grant saying, “The damage done by floods and hurricanes in our area has been a major issue. That’s why I commend Commissioner Bush for recognizing our local needs and allocating these funds. This goes a long way to solve real problems and is a great example of the federal, state and local governments working together.”

In May 2020, Commissioner George P. Bush announced the [kick-off of the application process](#) for the first round of more than \$2.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to protect Texas communities hit by Hurricane Harvey and severe flooding in 2015 and 2016. During the first round, the GLO conducted three competitive application programs from the [CDBG-MIT Action Plan](#). Those programs include:

- 2015 Floods State Mitigation Competition – GLO [awarded](#) \$31,426,781 to four grantees.
- 2016 Floods State Mitigation Competition – GLO [awarded](#) 21 grantees with \$135,462,438.

- Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition Round 1 (\$1 billion of \$2,144,776,720 total).

Applications closed for the first round of funding October 28, 2020, and the GLO evaluated all 290 submitted applications in accordance with the HUD approved scoring criteria. Eligible applications with the highest scores were awarded funds. The second round of the competition will award the remaining \$1,144,776,720 in mitigation funding to Hurricane Harvey eligible entities.

HUD defines mitigation as activities that increase resilience to disasters and reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, and suffering and hardship, by lessening the impact of future disasters. HUD requires that at least 50% of total funds must be used for activities benefiting low- to moderate-income (LMI) persons.

The State of Texas CDBG Mitigation Action Plan: Building Stronger for a Resilient Future outlines the use of funds, programs, eligible applicants, and eligibility criteria as required by HUD. The plan was sent to HUD on February 3, 2020, after an extraordinary public outreach effort including a 50-day public comment period and eight regional public hearings, far-surpassing HUD requirements. HUD approved the plan March 31, 2020. For more information, please visit recovery.texas.gov/mitigation.

City of Ganado: Water & Sewer Mitigation Project - \$7,190,056

LMI Percentage: 54.99%

Due to the location of the city of Ganado, the entire city is vulnerable to hurricanes, tropical depressions, tropical storms, and flood waters caused by excessive rainfall associated with these major weather events. The impact of flooding on residents of Ganado includes threats to public health and safety from the floodwater itself, damage to residential and commercial properties and overtopping of roadways that can inhibit residents and first responders from traversing the streets.

The project scope includes replacing water infrastructure and sanitary sewer lines to mitigate risks associated with future flooding events and help to ensure safe drinking water. The project will:

- 1) Replace approximately 29,200 LF wastewater pipes, upsize as necessary
- 2) Replace or rehabilitate approximately 71 manholes
- 3) Water line improvements include approximately 28,700 LF of PVC pipes, approximately 540-line replacements, 35 fire hydrant assemblies, and boring.

City of La Ward: Drainage Improvements Project - \$3,280,106

LMI Percentage: 55.26%

The city of La Ward is approximately 12 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The city has a pancake-flat topography with a poorly defined natural drainage system. Due to its inadequate drainage system, the city is prone to flooding during storm events with hurricanes and tropical storms being especially devastating to the community.

During major storm events, the existing drainage system is unable to accommodate the storm water flow, resulting in water ponding on the streets and adjoining properties and making all the residents vulnerable to flooding. In addition to causing damage to structures and community infrastructure, the flooding of the streets puts all citizens' health and safety at risk. Available ditches and culverts are mostly undersized, causing most drainage to flow on the streets. To mitigate the on-going risk of

flooding, the community drainage system will need to be improved by increasing capacity, expanding channels, and crowning streets to shed storm water.

The city of La Ward mitigation will improve the community-wide drainage system that will result in increased efficiency in the movement of water and enhance the safety of the roadways for drivers. The project will be accomplished by the following activities:

1. Install and/or upgrade roadside ditches
 - a. Storm water drainage improvements 0-3 feet in depth totaling 1,192 linear feet
 - b. Storm water drainage improvements 3-6 feet in depth totaling 5,314 linear feet
2. Install a new drainage channel totaling 806 linear feet
3. Crown streets to shed storm water to roadside drainage
 - a. Roadway drainage improvements less than 12 feet in width totaling 4,947 linear feet
 - b. Roadway drainage improvements greater than 12 feet in width totaling 11,938 linear feet
4. Repair or replace culverts totaling 350 linear feet
5. Install 63 square yards of materials for bank hardening and erosion control

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