

\$6.6 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Newton County

Funds to improve water infrastructure approved for the city of Newton

AUSTIN - Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, Texas Senator Robert Nichols and Mayor Mark Bean announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved \$6.6 million in flood mitigation projects to improve water infrastructure in the City of Newton. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit residents in a majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) area who have faced repetitive storm damage in 2015, 2016, in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey, and 2019.

“Newton is a perfect example of how many communities across Texas have been in need of replacing or fixing significantly outdated infrastructure,” said Commissioner Bush. “The GLO is proud to working with communities across Texas to fund important mitigation projects that will benefit these communities and their residents for generations, especially since these funds are going directly to projects that will benefit low-to-moderate-income Texans.”

“As we’ve witnessed this week, the City of Newton is not immune to the risks of flooding and destruction that come with devastating storms like Hurricane Harvey,” said Newton Mayor Mark Bean. “The hammering rains and rising floodwaters impact everything from our roadways to the availability of drinking water, to say nothing of the damage to homes and property. This \$6.6 million in funding from the GLO will help us implement flood system improvements that might not have been possible otherwise, and help ease the suffering and hardships faced by our residents, particularly low to moderate income and other vulnerable populations, during future storms and hurricanes.”

Texas Senator Robert Nichols offered his support from the Texas Capitol saying, "It's impossible to overstate how important these flood mitigation funds are to East and Southeast Texas. Senate District 3 saw severe flooding during the 2015 floods, the 2016 floods, and again during Hurricane Harvey in 2017. These flooding events showed just how vulnerable this area of the state is and how necessary mitigation efforts are. Senate District 3 won over \$105 million in the competitive flood mitigation fund award process because the projects in our region are vital to protecting Texans from future flood events. I appreciate the professionalism of the GLO throughout this process and our local officials who worked so hard to make these projects a reality."

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 Newton: Water System Improvements Project - \$6,646,990

LMI Percentage: 52.91%

The project will ease the suffering and hardships faced by all residents of the city of Newton, particularly low to moderate income and other vulnerable populations, during future flood and Hurricane events. This project will provide a city-wide benefit.

The city proposes to mitigate the existing threat to public health and safety by doing the following:

- 1) Drill a new well at a higher elevation.
- 2) Install a new 250,000-gallon storage tank.
- 3) Replace piping with 700 LF of main casing, 300 LF of screen, 300 LF of column pipe, 25,100 LF of water main, fire hydrants, control valve and piping, electrical controls, Aerator tower, aerator, pressure filter system, backwash tank, electrical and controls, emergency power generator, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system and associated appurtenances.
- 4) Repair pavement totaling 3,765 LF.

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