

# **\$29.7 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Jim Wells County**

*Funds to improve drainage infrastructure approved for Jim Wells County, cities of Alice and Premont*

AUSTIN - Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush and County Judge Juan Rodriguez announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved more than \$29.7 million in flood mitigation projects to improve drainage infrastructure in Jim Wells County and the cities of Alice and Premont. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit thousands of residents in majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas that have faced repetitive storm damage in 2015, 2017 with Hurricane Harvey, and 2018.

“Since 2015, 140 Texas counties have received federal disaster declarations, and now Texas leads the nation in these declarations,” said Commissioner Bush. “Residents of Jim Wells have experienced significant flood damage no less than three times in the past six years. But the funding needed to mitigate against flooding are hard to come by, especially in low-to moderate-income communities. The GLO is to partner with Jim Wells County in helping communities across our Texas coast to increase public safety, prevent property loss, and minimize hardship on Texans by supporting projects that will lower the impacts of future disasters.”

“Jim Wells County often gets torrential, unforgiving rains that lead to severe flooding, render streets impassable, strand residents in their homes, damage critical utilities, and prevent first responder operations,” said Jim Wells County Judge Juan Rodriguez. “This \$29.7 million from the Texas GLO is sorely needed to improve our drainage systems, upgrade storm sewers, and prevent future flooding potential. We are so appreciative to Commissioner George P. Bush and the GLO for providing this vital funding and we’re ready to get started immediately.”

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](https://recovery.texas.gov/mitigation).

*City of Alice: Virginia St. Area Drainage Project - \$6,942,192.60*  
LMI Percentage: 56.68%

This project will increase the resiliency of the existing drainage system in the Virginia Street area, located in the southern portion of the city of Alice. The City has suffered extensive flooding due to severe weather events, and the roads in the Virginia Street area lack adequate drainage structures to direct water away from streets and homes. The flooding renders streets impassable, stranding residents in their homes and preventing first responder operations. The proposed project will reconstruct the existing streets, will upgrade storm sewers, and will improve roadside ditches. These improvements will mitigate water ponding and provide a defined pathway for run off to be conveyed, thereby directing water away from residences and allowing streets to remain accessible.

The project has is composed of two sites:

Site 1: work will occur on S. Reynolds Street, Old Kingsville Road, Mora Street, Oliver Street, Mary Vera Street, Virginia Street and Prado Street. Construction will consist of the following:

1. The existing curb and sidewalk will be removed
2. 5,551 LF of new street curb and gutter will be installed
3. 7,650 LF of road will be reconstructed, along with sidewalk, curb inlets, and all related appurtenances
4. 5,280 LF of sewer pipes will be cleaned out

Site 2: work will occur on S. Reynolds Street and along the ditch located south of, and running parallel to, Hughes Street. Construction will consist of the following:

1. 3,500 LF of ditches will be reshaped and regraded
2. 3,500 LF of road will be reconstructed
3. 16 culverts with safety end treatments will be installed
4. 1 storm water drainage equalizer will be installed
5. Existing sewer pipes will be removed and replaced, for a total of 350 LF

*City of Premont: Drainage Improvements and Flood Mitigation Project - \$13,115,995*  
LMI Percentage: 55.28%

Although located 50 miles inland, the city of Premont frequently bears the harsh impact of tropical storms and hurricanes that devastate the Gulf Coast annually. With severe storms stalling as they encroach inland, the city often becomes the recipient of torrential unforgiving rains. When there are severe weather events Premont's watershed becomes immediately overwhelmed leaving the city incapacitated. The relatively "flat slope" terrain and low soil permeability adds to the city's susceptibility as many drainageways are constricted by inadequate channel capacities. The project will increase the resiliency and capacity of the drainage system, allowing storm water to flow off-site faster, and be detained. This will thereby alleviate future flooding potential, and reduce/eliminate damage to roads, residential properties, and critical utilities.

To accomplish this, the project encompasses drainage channel rehabilitation, drainage channel widening and deepening, installation of properly sized culvert systems, and creation of retention ponds:

- Ditch work- 3,390 LF
- Detention Ponds- 57,482 acres
- Drainpipe- Northwest 3<sup>rd</sup> St. 2,851 LF
- HMAC Pavement- 19,157 SY

*Jim Wells County: Rancho Alegre and Alice Acres Drainage and Detention Project - \$9,650,296*  
LMI Percentage: 54.87

The Jim Wells County mitigation project will make improvements to the county drainage system in the Rancho Alegre and Alice Acres Census Designated Places (CDPs). These improvements will help to mitigate flooding issues in this rural area.

This will be achieved through rehabilitation of drainage channels by widening and deepening, installation of properly sized culvert systems, and creation of retention ponds to capture stormwater runoff. The drainage project will hasten the flow of storm water runoff away from the CDPs, restore resiliency, and reduce the risk to public health and safety.

This will be accomplished by the following:

- 1) Rancho Alegre CDP
  - Ditch Improvements: 5,440 LF
  - Detention Pond Improvements: 152,750 CY
  - Drainage Improvement: 12,847 LF
- 2) Alice Acres CDP
  - Ditch Improvements: 26,560 LF
  - Detention Pond Improvements: 82,250 acres
  - Drainage Improvement: 9,303 LF

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