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News Release

FEMA Awards Town of Palm Beach Nearly \$8.5 Million to Bury Overhead Power Lines

ORLANDO, Fla. – The Town of Palm Beach will receive a nearly \$8.5 million federal grant to remove utility poles and bury overhead electrical lines, reducing the effects of future severe wind events.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) has approved \$8,465,355 to help fund the removal of utility poles and the burying of overhead power lines. Severe wind events can cause poles and/or overhead lines to fall, damaging property and causing both power outages and a risk of electric shock. Burying these lines can increase the resilience of the power grid and reduce impacts to people and property.

Funding for this HMGP project is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Act, the 1988 law that governs FEMA's disaster-related activities.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is an important source of federal disaster assistance. HMGP funds may become available following the president's declaration of a major disaster, and help strengthen communities by improving buildings, facilities and infrastructure that people use every day. A 2018 report from the National Institute of Building Sciences found that one dollar spent on hazard mitigation will save more than six dollars of recovery and rebuilding costs.

Generally, 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 higher 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 money spent by FEMA on disaster grants in the Hurricane Irma disaster. From this amount, HMGP reimburses the state up to 75 percent of eligible costs for 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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