

FEMA Announces Progress in Puerto Rico's Power Grid Work

Release Date: Juin 6, 2022

Guaynabo, Puerto Rico –? Puerto Rico's electric generation, transmission and distribution system is on its way to becoming more robust with the approval of funds for 15 projects under FEMA's Accelerated Award's Strategy, known as FAASt. The projects represent more than \$107.3 million in approved federal funding to kickstart what will become a more reliable electric grid for all Puerto Rico residents. In addition to these 15 projects, an Architecture and Engineering project was approved in October of last year.

"Today we are once again demonstrating that both federal and state government agencies, as well as the private sector, have a common purpose in order for Puerto Rico's reconstruction to continue moving forward. Teamwork is a priority for all of us, and together with FEMA, COR3, the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority and LUMA, we are on the road to a strong and resilient energy system for our island. We continue to move ahead and speed up the pace of the remaining work, because the excellent relationship we have with federal government agencies is delivering results," said Governor Pedro R. Pierluisi, who last week was in Washington, D.C., and spoke with U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm about the reconstruction and resiliency of the electric grid.

The historic amount of funds to rebuild the island's power grid represents an opportunity to build back better. Hazard mitigation is key as an additional measure to protect the federal investment. Likewise, this allows for the use of higher quality materials, among other planning measures that consider the risks associated with a future emergency.

"So far, we have approved an additional \$9.2 million in mitigation funding for energy projects. All of those involved in this historic undertaking strive to ensure that Puerto Ricans have first-class electrical facilities. This will take time, but we are focused on the goal of an unprecedented recovery," said FEMA's Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator José G. Baquero.



Two projects that stand out in this group are for the Aguirre power plant facility, which is part of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority's (PREPA) generation system. Over \$13.4 million in approved funds will go toward installing filtration equipment for the wastewater treatment system as well as for the water pump condenser. These help increase energy production and are essential elements for a more reliable grid.

For Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, Executive Director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3), “the constant communication that we maintain between PREPA, LUMA and FEMA, allows us as a team to further the reconstruction of the electrical grid. Currently, the repair of the Mayagüez and Aguirre power plants in Salinas are on track. Meanwhile, the public lighting projects are about to begin, which include the replacement of public light poles, photocells, luminaries and other components. These projects have an estimated cost of \$90.7 million. At COR3, we are committed to continue being facilitators in this process that will improve the quality of service and provide resilience to critical infrastructure.”

In addition to the FAASr projects, another \$8.7 million was awarded for PREPA's Costa Sur facility to address damage caused by the 2020 earthquakes. Reconstruction at the site is almost complete, which has the capacity to generate about one third of the island's power.

“The mission of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority is to provide electricity service in the most efficient, safe, affordable, reliable, environmentally friendly and responsive manner to the needs of our customers. In keeping with this mission, we are carrying out an aggressive and transformative repair program for the entire generation fleet, which amounts to approximately \$1.5 billion and will increase the reliable availability of our most economic generating units, considerably reducing the probability of blackouts due to lack of generation and the use of less cost-effective units,” said PREPA Executive Director Josué A. Colón Ortiz.

As for projects related to the transmission and distribution system, managed by Luma Energy, funds were recently approved to repair distribution feeders in Caguas and Ponce. Both systems transfer energy to businesses, homes and other facilities. Moreover, FEMA assigned funds for work at the Manatí substation to replace circuit breakers and other equipment that help prevent short circuits and other hazards that cause service interruptions. In addition, a federal share of over



\$20.9 million was approved to modernize and strengthen the Cataño substation, which includes \$6.8 million for mitigation activities to prevent similar damage from occurring in the future.

One aspect that contributes to improving the quality of life in the communities and helps provide safety on public roads is the street lighting. In addition to the replacement of public illumination systems previously announced by the company in Aguada and Maunabo; Guánica, Lajas and Luquillo are now added to the list.

“The Community Streetlight Initiative represents about \$1 billion in funds, and we look forward to helping make communities safer with these island wide projects. We are committed to continue working together with FEMA and our other partners to plan, engineer and execute these vital infrastructure projects, said Dr. Shay Bahamirad, Senior Vice President of Engineering, Asset Management and Capital Programs at Luma.

To date, FEMA has obligated over \$11.7 billion to PREPA for emergency work and permanent work projects related to Hurricane María and the 2020 earthquakes. FEMA works closely with the Government of Puerto Rico, COR3, PREPA and Luma to approve funds for projects that will result in more robust energy infrastructure.

For more information on Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane María, please visit fema.gov/es/disaster/4339 and recuperacion.pr. Follow our social media pages at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and Twitter @COR3pr.

