

Biden-Harris Administration, FEMA Approve over \$10.2 Million for Phase 1 of Solar Microgrids in Puerto Rico

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The total cost of the project on the islands of Vieques and Culebra is estimated at \$97 million once phase 1 and 2 are complete, and will provide more reliable electricity to over 9,000 residents

WASHINGTON -- Today, FEMA approved the first phase of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority's (PREPA) project to design a new solar-powered microgrid system for the island municipalities of Vieques and Culebra, located east of the main island. The total cost of the project is nearly \$97 million across two phases and will be fully funded by FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

"Over the past two years we have worked to rebuild Puerto Rico's electrical grid using available federal funds strategically. With this \$10.2 million obligation for phase 1 of the Vieques and Culebra microgrid projects, we ensure the resiliency that our residents in these islands need, especially in times of emergency," said Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro R. Pierluisi. "I thank the Biden Administration, FEMA and Administrator Criswell for all the support they have given us so that we have a more resilient and reliable electrical system."

The microgrid, which will be able to function independently from the main grid, includes a 12.5-megawatt solar-based system for Vieques and another 3-megawatt system for Culebra. The grids aim to increase power generation capabilities and leverage renewable energy through solar panels, making the project more sustainable.

"Today's phase 1 announcement of the Vieques and Culebra microgrid projects is an exciting step in our collective effort to get resilient energy systems deployed throughout Puerto Rico," said U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm. "Visiting both islands in January, we understand the importance of ensuring



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Vieques and Culebra residents are part of the planning process, and I'm proud of the collaborative work DOE's Sandia National lab has done with FEMA and the Government of Puerto Rico to help get this project off the ground to deliver cleaner, reliable power to homes across the island."

"The Department of Homeland Security has worked with our interagency partners to create a more sustainable future for Puerto Rico," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. "This project is an example of how the Biden-Harris Administration has made unprecedented investments to help communities in Puerto Rico adapt and become more resilient. We will continue to support efforts and provide necessary resources to improve power sector resiliency and increase access to more affordable energy and cleaner air."

These solar backup systems will improve the quality of life for residents by minimizing the impact of future power outages. Once the microgrids are installed, medical facilities, schools and other critical service providers will be able to function in case the main grid fails.

"We continue to witness more intense and increasingly severe storms. These new microgrids will help Puerto Rico become even more resilient, ensuring the lights stay on in hospitals, schools and other critical facilities if the main grid fails," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. "Projects that invest in the island's grid resilience are a priority for FEMA, the Government of Puerto Rico and the Department of Energy and will help us to better protect our most vulnerable populations against the impacts of natural disasters."

The first phase of this project, which accounts for over \$10.2 million of the total project cost, will consist of architectural and engineering design services, a geotechnical study and an electrical load assessment, among other preconstruction activities.

"We will continue to work closely with the Government of Puerto Rico, PREPA and the municipalities to make sure these microgrids benefit the people of Vieques and Culebra for generations to come. FEMA remains committed to Puerto Rico's recovery as we help build back better and mitigate damage from future natural hazards," said the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Puerto Rico, José G. Baquero.



FEMA's HMGP program provides funding to state, local, tribal and territorial governments so they can develop hazard mitigation plans and rebuild in a way that reduces, or mitigates, future disaster losses in their communities. Funds for projects under this program are obligated in phases as preliminary steps are completed that may lead to the approval of additional funding obligations.

"The development of this innovative resilience project contributes to the energy transformation established by the public policy of the Government of Puerto Rico. This project in Culebra and Vieques is in addition to 20 other developments that are in the initial stages of implementation around the island to provide energy resilience and promote the use of renewable energy," said the Executive Director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3), Eng. Manuel A. Laboy Rivera.

Puerto Rico has access to roughly \$4 billion in HMGP funding, the maximum allocated by Congress. To date, FEMA has allocated nearly \$3 billion under this program in addition to over \$29 billion under its Public Assistance program to help the island rebuild after Hurricane María.

For more on Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane María, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339 and recovery.pr. Follow us on social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and [Twitter @COR3pr](https://Twitter.com/COR3pr).

