

FEMA Awards Florida Keys Electric Cooperative \$2.17 Million to Protect Transmission Poles

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ORLANDO, Fla. – FEMA has approved a grant of **\$2,174,276** for the Florida Keys Electric Cooperative (FKEC) to upgrade 82 electrical transmission poles to protect them from high wind damage and substantially reduce the vulnerability of the utility’s electrical distribution system to future storms.

Funding from FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) was approved in response to a proposal by FKEC after Hurricane Irma in 2017. The grant will help pay for the conversion to stronger, stand-alone poles that can withstand winds of up to 210 miles per hour and provide natural corrosion resistance.

The HMGP is an important source of federal disaster assistance. Program funding may become available after the president declares a major disaster, with a goal of strengthening communities by improving buildings and critical infrastructure. A 2018 report by the National Institute of Building Sciences found that one dollar spent on hazard mitigation saves more than six dollars of recovery and rebuilding costs.

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