**TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE**
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# PRESS RELEASE

## $19 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Refugio County

Funds to improve drainage infrastructure for the communities of Woodsboro and Refugio

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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AUSTIN — Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst and County Judge Robert Blaschke announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved more than $19 million in flood mitigation projects to improve drainage infrastructure in Refugio County and the town of Refugio. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit residents in majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas that faced repetitive storm damage in 2015 and in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey.

“Unlike larger metropolitan areas, communities like Refugio have rarely had access to critical infrastructure funding to effectively mitigate against hurricanes and other storms,” said Commissioner Bush. “In the years since Hurricane Harvey, the GLO has helped to rebuild family homes and apartment complexes in Refugio County. With these mitigation funds, those homes as well as local businesses will be better protected against the next big storm.”

“During Hurricane Harvey, flooding damaged or destroyed 100% of the county’s affordable rental housing for our local workforce,” said Robert Blaschke, Refugio County Judge. “Our communities are only a few miles from the coast and surrounded by an intricate creek and river system, making them susceptible to flooding. This $19 million from Commissioner George P. Bush and the GLO will help us improve our local drainage systems and utilities to better protect our residents.”

Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) offered her support for the grant saying, “The damage done by floods and hurricanes in our area has been a major issue. That's why I commend Commissioner Bush for recognizing our local needs and allocating these funds. This goes a long way to solve real problems and is a great example of the federal, state and local governments working together."

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.

Town of Refugio: Citywide Wastewater Treatment Plant and Drainage Project - $12,112,636

LMI Percentage: 51.98%

The town of Refugio is located approximately 15 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. It is surrounded by an intricate creek and river system, making it susceptible to flooding. This susceptibility causes drainage issues, damaging critical assets such as local utilities and drainage systems. During Hurricane Harvey flooding damaged or destroyed 100% of the county's affordable rental housing for the local workforce.

As a result, Refugio's mitigation project proposes improvements to the drainage system and increases resiliency to the water and wastewater system affecting the entire town. These activities will mitigate the issues the town encounters providing continuous drainage and critical water and wastewater services to residents during heavy rain events, severe flooding, and subsequent power outages. These activities will increase the town's resilience to disasters, reduce/eliminate future damage and loss of property, greatly reduce the health risks to citizens, and reduce suffering and hardship by lessening the impact of future disasters on the town's drainage, water and wastewater systems.

This will be accomplished by the following:

- Build a new wastewater treatment plant adjacent to the existing plant above the floodplain
- Install lift station generators

- Demolish the existing elevated water storage tank and install a new elevated water storage tank
- Install generators at the wastewater treatment plant
- Construct drainage improvements at Whitlow Addition
- Install concrete pavement and underground storm drains on Commerce Street from FM 774 to Commons and on Commons Street from Swift to 1st Street (RR tracks)

Refugio County: Hazard Mitigation Improvements Project - $6,910,131

LMI Percentage: 59.17%

Refugio County's mitigation project proposes improvements to the drainage system and increases resiliency to the water system in the town of Woodsboro. The proposed activities will mitigate the issues Woodsboro encounters by providing continuous drainage and critical water services during flooding and power outages. These activities will increase the town's resilience to disasters, reduce future loss of property, reduce health risks to citizens, and lessen the impact of future disasters on the town's drainage and water systems.

This will be accomplished by the following:

1. Underground storm sewer drainage on Jeter Street from Driscoll Street to FM 1360 Ditch, to include inlets at street intersections.
2. Southwest drainage improvements on Driscoll, Davis, Gallia, Beasley, Vance, Elizabeth, Magnolia, and 6th Streets to include ditch regrading, driveway culverts and street culverts.
3. Drainage improvements on FM 1360 (Kasten Avenue) from FM 1360 to the ditch just south of the high school/Jeter Street to include concrete ditch lining and street drainage crossings.
4. New water well and water treatment facility to include ground storage tank, pumps, chlorination system, fencing, etc., at existing location.
5. New trunk line from new water plant to existing elevated storage tank.
6. Locke Street water line replacement from Terminal Street to FM 1360.