



## **TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Cmr. George P. Bush leads long-term disaster recovery training to commemorate 'A Year of Recovery' from Hurricane Harvey**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 24, 2018**

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AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush hosted a historic inaugural training for local officials from counties affected by Hurricane Harvey. Members of the Texas Association of Regional Councils' Councils of Government (COGs) participated in the training, which was conducted through the Texas General Land Office's (GLO) interactive HUB systems. This innovative technology links officials in Austin directly with officials in COG headquarters across the state. The inaugural training focused on the Disaster Recovery Framework and how local community leaders can be better prepared not just for emergency response, but short- and long-term disaster recovery.

"Texas has one of the most effective emergency response systems for protecting lives following disasters, but recovery and response require a very different skill set and knowledge base," said Commissioner Bush. "To make recovery more efficient and effective, we must train for recovery as we do for response. In the military you learn the importance of muscle memory in being able to perform under duress. Just as first responders train in advance of disasters, the GLO is bringing that preparedness concept to short- and long-term disaster recovery."

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Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush kicks off a historic inaugural recovery training for local officials

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Over the past year, Commissioner Bush and his team at the GLO have made more than 360 visits to communities across the state - helping each to recover from Hurricane Harvey, while improving resiliency to future disasters. A lack of understanding of the disaster recovery process and available training for regional and local community leaders was identified as an issue of concern. As the GLO is commemorating "A Year of Recovery," Commissioner Bush is kicking off this new interactive quarterly training

program as a first step in helping to train leaders in disaster prone communities across the state.

"The complexities of short- versus long-term housing assistance, mitigation funding and other potential available resources can be overwhelming, especially in a time of community crisis," said Commissioner Bush. "Our goal is to train Texas' community leaders for recovery so that it is a seamless transition from response to recovery when disaster strikes."

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Pete Philips, GLO Sr. Deputy Director for Community Development and Revitalization

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Through the HUB system, local official can gather in the regional COG headquarters to participate in convenient trainings, briefings or for other interactive purposes. The HUB systems were provided by the GLO to each COG in regions affected by Hurricane Harvey to assist in the recovery process.

"The Texas Association of Regional Councils is honored to partner with the Texas General Land Office on this vital disaster recovery mission," said Ginny Lewis, TARC Executive Director. "We are also proud to join with the GLO on this exciting new training opportunity, which leverages the experience and local network of the COGs, while connecting our regional teams with state officials in Austin like never before."

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Christa Lopez, Director of the GLO's FEMA Harvey Housing Mission

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More than 100 county judges, commissioners, mayors, council members, and staff members participated in the inaugural training. Christa López, Director of the GLO's FEMA Harvey housing mission, was the lead instructor for the training. With more than two decades experience, López also achieved a masters in Emergency and Disaster Management, an Advanced Professional Development Certificate from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and previously served as the Individual Assistance Branch Direct for Federally declared disasters at the Texas Division of Emergency Management. Staff from the Texas Association of Regional Councils, a partner with the GLO in both the short- and long-term recovery effort and the umbrella organization for the COGs, also participated in the innovative training.

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