



**TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **Cmr. George P. Bush to FEMA: Partial Home Repair Programs are Vital to Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 Following a Hurricane**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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AUSTIN — Today Texas General Land Office (GLO) Commissioner George P. Bush announced he sent a letter to Keith Turi, Assistant Administrator for the Recovery Directorate for the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), asking the agency to reconsider discontinuing the use of a partial home repair program during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic necessitates the consideration for social distancing when sheltering potential disaster survivors to reduce the spread of infection, especially as the busy Atlantic hurricane season began on June 1<sup>st</sup>," Commissioner Bush said in the letter. "Accordingly, the GLO is asking FEMA to reinstate a partial repair program to provide another tool for states and territories to appropriately respond to a major disaster during the pandemic."

In 2017 following Hurricane Harvey, the GLO was the first state agency in history to administer a Direct Housing Mission with financial and technical support from FEMA. As a part of this mission, the GLO incorporated a program called Partial Repair and Essential Power for Sheltering (PREPS), which provided basic, emergency home repairs - not to include finish work - so Texans can shelter in their home while they are completing permanent repairs. These temporary repairs were available for homes that sustained less than \$17,000 in FEMA verified loss. FEMA determines an applicant's eligibility for the PREPS program.

"The COVID-19 pandemic poses an unprecedented challenge for temporary sheltering following a disaster, and governments charged with facilitating sheltering should have every available tool at their disposal to provide safe, sanitary, and functional housing following a disaster," Commissioner Bush said in the letter. "Retooling a more viable partial repair program would provide additional flexibility to respond to a major disaster while simultaneously preventing the spread of COVID-19."

PREPS was vital in supplementing emergency sheltering in communities that were faced with needs that significantly exceed existing capacity. The program helped families whose homes incurred limited damage but would otherwise have been displaced from their homes.

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