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PRESS RELEASE

Nearly \$15.6 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Brazoria County

Funds to improve wastewater and drainage infrastructure approved for the cities of Brazoria, Freeport and Oyster Creek

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AUSTIN — Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, County Judge Matt Sebesta and Mayor Brooks Bass announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved nearly \$15.6 million in flood mitigation projects to improve wastewater and drainage infrastructure in Brazoria County and the cities of Brazoria, Freeport and Oyster Creek. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit thousands of residents in largely low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas that have faced repetitive storm damage in 2015, 2016 and in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey.

“Communities across the Texas coast have been in need of better resiliency to prevent flooding from repetitive storms,” said Commissioner Bush. “In some communities, current wastewater treatment and drainage systems are 40 or 50 years old. The GLO is proud to announce funding today that will benefit these communities and their residents for generations.”

“Improving our drainage and wastewater processing systems are some of our county’s greatest needs,” said County Judge Matt Sebesta. “These needs have been priorities of our local leaders for many years, especially after experiencing repetitive flooding. This \$15 million in funding will help us build new wastewater treatment facilities, build a better drainage system, and improve sanitary sewer systems that can overflow during major storms.”

“Improving our wastewater collection and treatment system is one of our city’s greatest needs,” said Brooks Bass, Mayor of Freeport “These needs have been a priority of this Council since we started, especially after getting calls from folks suffering repetitive back-ups. This funding will help us build new wastewater treatment facilities, build a better collection system, and improve sanitary sewer systems that cause overflows during major storms.”

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.
City of Brazoria: Citywide Flood Control and Drainage Improvements - \$4,311,537

LMI Percentage: 64.86%

The City of Brazoria's flat topography and location between two major rivers causes frequent flooding, especially during severe weather events. The City has identified the prevention of flooding by creating and improving an efficient and effective drainage system as its most essential mitigation need.

This project will make improvements to the existing drainage system, which will result in increased movement of storm water through the drainage channels that will ultimately be discharged into the nearest rivers. The planned mitigation actions will effectively mitigate future flooding during major storm events by providing an efficient drainage system throughout the entire community. The project will consist of:

- Ditch regarding of 83,500 LF (15.8 miles) (approx.)
- Street drive and culvert replacement of 12,600 LF (approx.)
- Pavement restoration of 8,000 LF (approx.)
- Ancillary activities i.e. erosion control, seeding and restoration

City of Freeport: Wastewater Treatment Plant Project - \$5,991,468

LMI Percentage: 67.19%

The project includes constructing a new Wastewater Treatment Plant in-kind to the east of the existing plant. The improved design includes a full geotechnical investigation and

foundation design to prevent the type of foundation damage that has occurred at the existing plant.

The project includes the following:

- Construct a new 1.6 MGD steel package Wastewater Treatment Plant to replace the existing plant.
- Construction of a foundation that is engineered for the soil conditions and possible flooding that could occur on site.
- Install new mechanical components in the proposed steel package plant for an operational facility complete in place.

This Wastewater Treatment Plant project is expected to reduce the risk of failure of the steel package WWTP as a result of a storm or hurricane event. The foundation settling makes the plant susceptible to further failure during a severe weather event. Mitigating the risk of failure of the plant during a major storm is critical for the city to protect their wastewater treatment capabilities during a major storm; protecting all residents, businesses and industries served by the city.

City of Oyster Creek
Wastewater Collection System Rehabilitation Project - \$5,291,898

LMI Percentage 67.76

The City of Oyster Creek's existing sanitary sewer system experiences significant infiltration & inflow of stormwater into the collection system during periods of heavy rainfall and flooding due to hurricanes, tropical storms, tropical depressions, thunderstorms, and riverine flooding.

The introduction of stormwater into the sanitary sewer system results in surcharges in the collection system, overloading the system's lift stations and wastewater treatment plant. This system overload can result in manhole overflows, polluting the environment with raw sewage. When the wastewater treatment plant experiences hydraulic overload, inadequately treated wastewater is discharged into the receiving waters, posing a threat to the environment and any of the public who may come into contact with the untreated wastewater. Flooding in Oyster Creek during extreme weather events results in significant negative environmental impacts and threatens public and private property and assets.

The project is a citywide wastewater collection system rehabilitation mitigation effort which will include the following:

- Rehabilitation of approximately 50,400 LF of sanitary sewer lines
- Rehabilitation of approximately 131 manholes
- Reconnection of approximately 600 sanitary sewer services

The improvements will benefit every resident of Oyster Creek, improving the resiliency of the community's wastewater collection system to withstand the impacts of the identified risks. This work will encompass 95% of Oyster Creek's sanitary sewer system.