

\$16 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Calhoun County

Funds to improve roads, sewer and drainage infrastructure approved for Calhoun County, City of Seadrift

AUSTIN - Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst, County Judge Richard Meyer and Mayor Elmer DeForest announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved more than \$16 million in flood mitigation projects to improve roads, sewer and drainage infrastructure in Calhoun County and the City of Seadrift. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit thousands of residents in majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas at high risk of hurricanes and tropical storms.

“Texas has, unfortunately led the nation in disaster declarations, and many of the areas hit hardest have never had access to funding to help prevent damage from happening again,” said Commissioner Bush. “The historic funding GLO is awarding today will go directly to projects to fortify Texas homes, businesses and critical infrastructure against future disasters for generations. The need for mitigation is great and we are proud to be helping so many underserved communities to protect their local resident.”

“Calhoun County is frequently in the direct path of hurricanes and storms, making us prone to significant flooding that can leave residents stranded,” said Richard Meyer, Calhoun County Judge. “The \$16 million in funding announced today will help us improve our drainage systems, make us more resilient to disasters, and reduce the long-term risk of loss of life and property in our communities. I want to thank Commissioner George P. Bush and the Texas General Land Office providing this critical funding for these projects that will protect our community.”

“The City of Seadrift is frequently in the direct path of hurricanes, tropical storms and the periodic severe weather associated with Coastal Texas. This makes the City prone to significant flooding that can leave residents stranded and even low-level flooding affecting residences and businesses alike,” said Elmer DeForest, City of Seadrift mayor. “The \$4,850,939 in funding announced today by the GLO will help the City improve our drainage systems, make the City more resilient to disasters, storms and the like, reducing the long-term risks of loss of life and property in our City. I want to thank Commissioner George P. Bush and the Texas General Land Office providing this critical funding for these projects that will protect our City.”

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.

Calhoun County: Heron Slough Drainage System Improvements Project - \$11,305,233

LMI Percentage: 56.68%

This project will increase the resiliency of the existing drainage system in the city of Seadrift. Seadrift often experiences flooding due to inadequate ditch and culvert capacity and the inability of the system to quickly drain water runoff, leaving this low-income community flooded with standing water for a moderate amount of time. Many upstream properties flood during storm events due to the slow drain time of the city drainage system. Heron Slough is the main city drainage passage, and it encompasses a large portion of the city.

- 1) Clean out and increase capacity of the Heron Slough
- 2) Increase capacity of tributary ditches throughout the southern part of the city that flow to the Slough and size their culverts appropriately
- 3) Upgrade four road crossings located on 4th, 5th, 6th, and Dallas Street to make them more resistant to erosion and retain a higher structural strength during and after a storm event.
- 4) Build a new diversion culvert on 9th Street to divert most water runoff down the new culvert instead of going into Heron Slough.

City of Seadrift: Drainage Improvement Project - \$4,850,939.04

LMI Percentage: 56.68%

The City of Seadrift is the only city along the shores of the San Antonio Bay. Generally protected from the daily churn of the gulf, the city unfortunately is frequently in the path of hurricanes and tropical depressions. Just one bay north (20 miles) of where Hurricane Harvey's eye made landfall, the city suffered high winds and several feet of storm water. Almost all homes sustained damage, and some were completely destroyed.

The harbor, the economic driver of the community, suffered a hard hit along with coastal Bayfront erosion. Vegetation was decimated as streets were virtually impassable- flooded with storm water,

covered with downed power lines and trees which blocked almost all roads. Every flooding event in the city leaves houses as islands midst the high water and strands residents in their homes until the waters recede. During all flood/ hurricane events, flood waters cover the streets creating dangerous ingress/egress for residents and emergency vehicles.

As identified in the 2017 Calhoun County HMAP, the Seadrift drainage project is designed to reduce flooding within the city of Seadrift. The drainage improvements will allow the storm water to drain to San Antonio Bay quicker and mitigate flooding from all but the most severe storms.

The project will include of regrading and deepening of ditches and replacing drainage culverts throughout the city. The project contains the following improvements:

- 1) Deepening of Herrin's Slough from Bay Ave. to 9th St.
- 2) Replacing of road crossing culverts at 3rd Street, 4th Street, 6th Street, and Dallas Avenue.
- 3) Construction of storm sewer and appurtenances along Oakland Avenue from Hallies Bayou to 9th Street.
- 4) Construction of storm sewer and appurtenances on 6th Street from Oakland Avenue to Denver Avenue.
- 5) Street reconstruction on Oakland Avenue from 4th Street to 6th Street.

This project will increase the resilience of the city to disasters and reduce the long term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, suffering and hardship by lessening the impact of future disasters by relieving the impact of the flooding that comes with heavy rain events including hurricanes and tropical depressions.

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