

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice of Availability of the Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Utility Repair, Replacement, and Realignment from
Hurricane Maria
Island-Wide, Puerto Rico
FEMA-DR-4339-PR

Notification is hereby given to the public of the intent of the Department of Homeland Security-Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS-FEMA) to provide federal funding to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Applicant, for the repair, replacement, and relocation of utilities damaged from Hurricane Maria's wind, rain, and floodwater. A disaster declaration was issued for Hurricane Maria on September 20, 2017 encompassing the entire territory. The declaration authorized federal public assistance to affected communities and certain non-profit organizations per FEMA, and in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5172) as amended; the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (SRIA) of 2013; and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-123). The Central Office of Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3) is the Recipient for FEMA grants and multiple agencies may be subrecipients for specific projects.

The need for the action is to re-establish a safe and reliable network of utilities through repair, replacement, or relocation in order to reconnect the communities affected by the storm with safe and efficient delivery of energy, water, sewer service, and communications, and help reduce the potential for future damages by upgrading damaged utilities in accordance with current engineering codes and standards. The utilities covered under this Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) are defined as: water storage facilities, water pump stations, treatment plants for potable water/wastewater and their delivery systems; supplemental power generation, transmission, and distribution facilities, including, but not limited to, wind turbines, solar farms, generators, substations, and power lines; natural gas transmission and distribution facilities; stormwater, sewage, and wastewater collection systems and treatment plants; and communication systems.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a PEA has been prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed action on the human environment. DHS-FEMA's requirement of addressing floodplain management and wetlands protection in accordance with 44 CFR Part 9 is incorporated within the PEA. This Utilities PEA is available for agency and public review and comment for an additional period of thirty (30) days ending on December 22, 2020. The publicly available materials include a Spanish translation of the PEA, Executive Summary, and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The Utilities PEA is accessible for download at the following links:

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/region/2>

https://www.recovery.pr/documents/3b%20Utilities_PEA_FINAL_20200710%20-%20508.pdf

A hard copy of the PEA is also available for review at the following locations:

Caguas Municipality
City Hall William Miranda Marin
Environmental Affairs Office, Second Floor
Street Padiá, corner Jose Mercados Avenue
Caguas, Puerto Rico

Humacao Municipality
Municipal Government Center & City Hall
Planning Office, Third Floor
Street Efraín Meléndez
Humacao, Puerto Rico

Aibonito Municipality
City Hall, Permit Office
Annex num. 56
Planning Office
Aibonito, Puerto Rico

Bayamon Municipality
Bayamon City Hall
Environmental Ranger Program, Fourth Floor
Street Num. 2, Km. 11
Bayamon, Puerto Rico

This PEA reflects the evaluation and assessment of the federal government, the decision maker for the federal action; however, FEMA will take into consideration any substantive comments received during the public review period to inform the final decision regarding grant approval and project implementation. The public is invited to submit written comments by emailing FEMA-EHP-DR4339@fema.dhs.gov or via mail to: Federal Emergency Management Agency Region II – DR-4339-PR Puerto Rico Joint Recovery Office 50 State Road 165 Guaynabo, PR 00968 Attn: Puerto Rico Utilities PEA Public Comments. If FEMA receives no substantive comments from the public and/or agency reviewers, FEMA will adopt the PEA as final and will issue a FONSI. If FEMA receives substantive comments, it will evaluate and address comments as part of the FONSI documentation or in a Final PEA.