

**JOINT FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL
PUBLIC NOTICE
February 7, 2025**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and Florida Division of Emergency Management have received the following application for Federal grant funding. Final notice is hereby given of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) consideration to provide funding in the form of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Funds will be provided in accordance with Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal actions must be reviewed and evaluated for feasible alternatives and for social, economic, historic, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. Under Executive Order (EO) 11988 and EO 11990 FEMA is required to consider alternatives to and to provide public notice of any proposed actions in or affecting floodplains or wetlands. EO 12898 also requires FEMA to provide the opportunity for public participation in the planning process and to consider potential impacts to minority or low-income populations.

Funding for the proposed project will be conditional upon compliance with all applicable federal, tribal, state and local laws, regulations, floodplain standards, permit requirements and conditions.

Applicant:

South Florida Water Management District

Project Title:

HMGP-4673-221-R (525)- South Florida Water Management District, Collier Big Cypress Basin Microwave Tower, Flood Risk Reduction

Location of Proposed Work:

No homes are affected by this project. The project is located on District-owned property in Immokalee, Collier County, Florida 34142 near the north end of Lake Trafford.

Proposed Work and Purpose:

The South Florida Water Management District proposes to provide flood risk reduction in the Big Cypress Basin area. This project proposes protection by improving the ability to remotely operate the area's coastal canal gates during flooding events. The project includes the installation of a new microwave tower, electronic equipment shelter, gas tank, generator, and underground electrical connections near Lake Trafford. Currently, communications are through cell phone towers which can go offline during storm events. This leaves the District without communications and hinders operations. The new tower will benefit the northern portion of the basin, which does not currently have a tower, allowing the canal gates to be remotely controlled in the area and operational during power outages.

Project Alternatives:

The alternatives to the project that have been and will be considered are 1) the no action alternative and 2) to install underground fiber optic line connecting the C43 Tower to the Faka Union Tower. These alternatives to the proposed project are not viable because under Alternative 1) flood control operations will continue to be done manually by District staff or remotely using the existing cellular network which is not reliable during or after extreme weather events, and flood risk would continue; and Alternative 2) would require extensive land acquisition, design, permitting, and much larger impacts to critically sensitive environmental regions such as Corkscrew Ecosystem Watershed and the Picayune Strand Restoration Project that is a part of the CERP (Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program); the length of this line would be more than 40 miles long and maintenance of these lines would be extremely difficult due to the location; therefore, this alternative is not practicable.

Comment Period:

Comments are solicited from the public; local, state or federal agencies; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed project. The comments should be made in writing and addressed to the Florida Division of Emergency Management, Bureau of Mitigation, 2555 Shumard Oak Blvd., Tallahassee,

FL 32399-2100. These are due within 15 days of this notice. The State will forward comments to applicable regulatory agencies as needed. Interested persons may submit comments, obtain more detailed information about the proposed action, or request a copy of the findings by contacting:

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