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**Lee Commissioners approve agreements to harden two arenas used as emergency shelters**

Fort Myers, FL, Oct.19, 2021 – The Lee Board of County Commissioners voted Tuesday to approve funding agreements with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for \$4.5 million to harden the roofs, windows and doors at Hertz Arena and \$2.8 million to do the same at Alico Arena, which both serve as emergency shelters.

The grants cover 100% of the cost of hardening these critical facilities, which have served as shelters during emergency declarations in Lee County as well as elsewhere in Florida.

The federal Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) program made these funds available after Hurricane Irma when Lee County was designated a Most Impacted and Distressed area by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Board approved the grant applications in June 2020.

Commissioners have now signed \$14.7 million in post-Irma CDBG disaster relief and mitigation funding agreements, including \$7.1 million for improvements to canal and roadside flood control structures and sidewalk repair in San Carlos Park and \$253,000 for a coastal risk assessment and resiliency study. Through the final quarter of 2021, commissioners are expected to review and approve additional funding agreements valued at \$6.9 million for disaster-mitigation projects, including hardening of the Lee County Waste-to-Energy plant, sidewalk and roadside drainage repairs, canal clearing and replacement of pedestrian walkways.

Lee County competes statewide for these grants.

For more information on the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's mitigation program for communities statewide impacted by storms in 2016-2017, go to:

<https://floridajobs.org/rebuildflorida/mitigation>