

State News for NSPE Members

Electric Power Authority Reaches \$1B Agreement for Guajataca Dam Fix

The US Army Corps of Engineers has signed a \$1 billion agreement with the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority to make permanent repairs and improvements to the island nation's beleaguered Guajataca Dam, [Engineering News-Record reports](#).

Puerto Rico Governor Pedro R. Pierluisi announced the agreement, saying the Corps will support the dam's reconstruction, including design, engineering, procurement, contract administration, construction supervision and project management. The agency said the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide funding for the project, to be completed in 2028.

The Lake Guajataca reservoir currently provides drinking water to more than 300,000 in the cities of San Sebastián, Quebradillas, Isabela, Moca, Aguada, and Aguadilla as well as providing water for agricultural irrigation. Construction efforts will also restore and modernize the dam's hydroelectric capability, which was shut down following damage from Hurricane Maria.

Built in 1928, the 984-ft-long, 120-ft-tall hydroelectric earthen dam, located in the island's northwestern region, experienced a critical failure on September 20, 2017, following Hurricane Maria. The Category 5 storm, with winds reaching 175 m.p.h., killed more than 3,000 people and caused more than \$91 billion in damages. The dam suffered severe damage to its spillway, pipes, and water intake, endangering 70,000 residents. [Read more](#).

Biden Admin Eyes \$5 Billion Fossil Fuel Build-Out in Puerto Rico

The Army Corps of Engineers plans to spend up to \$5 billion on temporary fossil fuel power plants and infrastructure repairs in Puerto Rico, a move the agency says will improve the territory's troubled electric grid but that critics warn could derail the

island's clean energy transition, [EnergyWire reports](#).

The Army Corps issued a notice in June seeking a contractor to fix existing power plants, electric transformers and cables and build new natural gas- and oil-fired generating units in Puerto Rico. The work has been authorized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and will be funded by disaster relief money approved by the Biden administration after Hurricane Fiona last year, according to FEMA spokesperson Dasha Castillo.

The announcement sparked backlash from environmental advocates who said the Army Corps' plans could make Puerto Rico's goal of 40% renewable energy by 2025 unattainable. Advocates have called for deploying rooftop solar and batteries to solve the territory's long-standing grid challenges. [Read more](#).

Puerto Rico Gets \$334.6 Million to Deploy Broadband Infrastructure

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced that Puerto Rico will receive \$334.6 million to deploy "affordable, reliable" high-speed internet service, as [reported by News is My Business](#). At present, 61,871 homes and small businesses in Puerto Rico lack access to a high-speed internet connection, the federal agency stated. The funding is part of the global \$42.45 billion allocation from the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program to each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five territories.

The BEAD funding will be used to deploy or upgrade broadband networks to ensure that everyone has access to high-speed Internet service. Once deployment goals are met, any remaining funding can be used on broadband adoption, training, and workforce development efforts, among other eligible uses. [Read more](#).

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#).

Meet the 2023 NSPE Emerging Leaders



NSPE is pleased to recognize 15 talented professionals who recently completed the Society's [Emerging Leaders Program](#). This diverse group of young professionals was selected from around the country to take part in an intensive, unique enterprise designed to equip them as leaders in the engineering field.

- **Nicholas J. Bailey, P.E.** (Cincinnati, Ohio)
- **Frank Block III, Ph.D., P.E.** (Silver Spring, Maryland)
- **Timothy Choma, P.E.** (Iselin, New Jersey)
- **Courtney Cunningham, P.E.** (Houston, Texas)
- **Steven T. Fox, P.E.** (Nashville, Tennessee)
- **Blane Gee, P.E.** (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)
- **Holly Hartley Guillaume, P.E.** (Katy, Texas)
- **Lingbee Chyna Lim, P.E.** (Charleston, South Carolina)
- **Brianne R. Jole, P.E.** (Lubbock, Texas)
- **Corey Kingsland, P.E.** (Kansas City, Missouri)
- **Carter Lytal, P.E.** (Lubbock, Texas)
- **Rebecca Martinez, P.E.** (Cherry Hill, New Jersey)
- **Alissa Neuhausen, P.E.** (Rockville, Maryland)
- **Victor Odili, P.E.** (Conroe, Texas)
- **Skylar Wierzbicki, P.E.** (Grapevine, Texas)

The program is [accepting applications](#) for the next class of rising leaders until August 31.



The upcoming [Professional Engineers Day](#) (Wednesday, August 2) is an incredible

opportunity to showcase the value of NSPE and your PE license. We encourage you to post on your social media accounts a highlight from your community, your work, your impact, your story and include the #IAMNSPE, #WeareNSPE, #ProudPE.

NSPE's [apparel shop](#) features the PE Day logo on a variety of items including many styles of t-shirts and other apparel for men, women, and kids, as well as accessories like mugs, notebooks, tote bags, wall prints, and even phone cases. [Shop now.](#)

Check Out the Latest Issue of *PE*

[The Chatter About AI](#)

OpenAI's ChatGPT came on the scene in November 2022. This type of generative AI has made a noticeable impact in a brief period of time and other versions of chatbots have been released. This emerging technology is sparking discussions about what impact AI could have on the engineering workforce and in engineering practice.



[Reaching Tomorrow's Innovators](#)

DiscoverE has released its latest research on the views of high school students and parents on engineering and engineering careers. The Messages Matter results were encouraging as they reveal that targeted messages and profiles of engineers can spur interest in engineering among the very groups that will ensure a more diverse future for the field.

Members who subscribe to the [digital edition of *PE*](#) can access the current and back issues.

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