Observer
You. Your Neighbors. Your Neighborhood.

Longboat gets update from FEMA on 2024 storm claims

Emails from the federal agency include specific updates on six claims the town made for reimbursement.

By S.T. Cardinal | 5:00 a.m. August 25, 2026



Several beachfront properties on Longboat were severely damaged from Hurricane Helene's storm surge.

Image courtesy of Matthew Ballew

LONGBOAT KEY NEWS

Share

The town has spent years waiting for FEMA money, and still don't know when it's coming.

By the town of Longboat Key's account, they have made claims for 26 eligible projects. But, a recent letter to the town from a FEMA representative writes there are 22 projects the federal agency is reviewing, 10 of which have been "obligated" for reimbursement.

"We understand the importance of timely reimbursement," wrote FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Manager Josefina Genao in an email. "FEMA remains committed to providing every dollar of federal assistance for which the Town is eligible under the law. The most efficient path to obligation remains the timely submission and review of complete documentation that supports the eligibility of the damaged facility, work performed, and costs."

The best of Your Observer, delivered directly to your inbox

Get the latest in news, sports, schools, arts and things to do in Sarasota, Siesta Key, Longboat Key and East County.

Sign Up

Latest in News

Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton said the town expects to receive $29.7 million from FEMA for claims from Hurricanes Helene and Milton. The biggest portions of the $29.7 million comes from debris cleanup reimbursements and upcoming beach renourishment costs.

The town's debris cleanup claims with FEMA total $5.6 million. There are two separate claims for debris removal being evaluated, according to FEMA. The first "requires additional information from Longboat Key representatives before moving forward in the process," and the second is under review to confirm the project is ready to advance.



August 24, 2026
Longboat updates lighting over turtle concerns



August 24, 2026
Firefighters shimmy through labyrinth for training



August 22, 2026
Pink house foreclosure auction delayed



August 21, 2026
Last chance for sandbag storm prep



August 19, 2026
Wastewater investments pay off with a rejuvenated Sarasota Bay

App

Download the Your Observer app

Stay in the know with the latest local news. Any device, anytime, anywhere.

DOWNLOAD NOW

Related Article



July 29, 2026

FEMA delays highlight need for town reserves

Longboat Key is awaiting more than $29.7 million from FEMA for recovery costs associated with Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

FEMA Public Assistance Program Delivery Manager Koree Hughes wrote in an email to town accounting manager Ronica Jackson that the debris removal claim has been submitted five or six times and sent back subsequently “due to project detail issues” including items in the summary workbook that require additional clarification or backup.

“I want to be clear that I appreciate (the town’s) continued cooperation and support. I also do not want to provide Ronica with bits and pieces of what may be wrong with the project before our review is complete,” Hughes wrote. “After my thorough review, I will be able to provide a complete list of everything our debris team is confused about or has questions on at this time. This should help ensure the feedback is organized, comprehensive, and easier for the team to address. I will hold myself accountable for any delays in this process. At the same time, I want to assure you that this matter is currently being reviewed closely and carefully as it is a large project.”

Hughes wrote that the town’s claims with FEMA are “a priority for my team and I.”

Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams said she is concerned about the delay, especially as beach renourishment nears on the calendar. The town conducts beach renourishment on a recurring basis about every seven years. The last time beach renourishment occurred on the barrier island was 2021, and the next project is planned for late 2027 or early 2028. Before that, the town hopes to construct a groin field on the Gulfside Road area. Williams said the town’s public works department is confident it will receive beach renourishment funds from FEMA, and if they don’t, the project will move forward regardless.

“I think we are committed to doing that because we have an engineered shoreline and we do not use the Army Corps of Engineers for this,” Williams said. “There are several jurisdictions that use the US Army Corps of Engineers so they get more federal money than we do. In Longboat Key, we don’t do that. We have a beach fund where we tax the beach side people one rate and the other side pay another rate and that’s how we pay for (a big portion) of our beach restoration. I don’t see that changing because if you let Army Corps do your restoration, you have to give them permanent rights of way, and that’s just too difficult to get for all those properties at this point.”

Sign Up for In Case You Missed It

A Saturday dose of the week's top stories from Sarasota, Longboat Key and East County.

Enter your email

Sign Up



AUTHOR

S.T. Cardinal

S.T. "Tommy" Cardinal is the Longboat Key news reporter. The Sarasota native earned a degree from the University of Central Florida in Orlando with a minor in environmental studies. In Central Florida, Cardinal worked for a monthly newspaper covering downtown Orlando and College Park. He then worked

for a weekly newspaper in coastal South Carolina where he earned South Carolina Press Association awards for his local government news coverage and photography.

Latest News



August 25, 2026

Manatee schools reach new heights when it comes to graduation



August 24, 2026

Longboat updates lighting over turtle concerns



August 24, 2026

Fruitville Roa apartment co wins Planning adjustments

Sponsored Health Content

Sponsored Content

Copyright © 2026 Observer Media Group Inc., All Rights Reserved