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Ports begins the Request for Qualifications Process for a new runway at the Aguadilla airport

With an estimated cost of over \$ 130 million

San Juan, June 7, 2021 - The Puerto Rico Ports Authority (PRPA) initiated a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to choose the firm that will design and build a new parallel runway to the existing one at the Rafael Hernández International Airport in Aguadilla, PRPA Executive Director Joel A. Pizá Batiz announced today.

“Currently the Rafael Hernández de Aguadilla is the second most used commercial airport on the island, receiving a record 753,996 passengers in 2019, and processing an average of three million pounds of cargo per month. Runway 8-26 is 11,700 feet long, 200 feet wide, the longest in the Caribbean, but is rapidly reaching its useful life. The scope of this RFQ will consist of choosing the firm that will design and build a new concrete runway to replace the existing one, which will measure 11,000 feet long by 150 feet wide, at an estimated cost of more than \$ 130 million,” Pizá Batiz highlighted.

The RFQ is now available on the PRPA website, www.prpa.pr.gov, and at www.BQNrunway.com. The entire RFQ process was consulted and approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The current runway would become a taxiway parallel to the new airstrip, which will allow the flow of cargo and passengers to go unaffected during the construction of the new runway.

Construction of the new runway is expected to take place over the next four fiscal years. PRPA, in conjunction with the FAA, has developed a financial plan to support and finance this important project. The part of the cost-sharing financing with the government of Puerto Rico has been assigned and deposited in a restricted bank account solely for use in this project, Pizá Batiz added.

The deadline to submit the Request for Clarifications (RFC) is June 25, 2021, and the date to submit the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) is July 19, 2021.

“The Aguadilla airport is a key piece for any economic development plan in the west of the island, and as part of the network of regional airports that we can offer in efforts to turn Puerto Rico into a nationwide air cargo and manufacturing hub. I congratulate the Ports director for putting federal funds to work that will immediately ensure job creation,” Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González Colón said.

The current runway at the Aguadilla airport was initially built and operated by the United States Army Air Corps in the late 1930s to provide support during World War II.

The airport evolved into a United States Air Force base as a base for the Strategic Air Command and the B-52 bombers in the 1950s.

PRPA eventually took possession of the airport during the federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program in the 1970s.

“We are very confident that with this Request for Qualifications that we announced today, we will finally be able to start the process of hiring a firm that can begin the construction of this important asset, such as the new runway at the Aguadilla airport. Without a doubt, this project will allow us to continue positioning Aguadilla as an important air cargo and passenger hub in Puerto Rico and in the Caribbean region,” Pizá Batiz concluded.

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