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## Rooftops to Power Up in Puerto Rico With \$440 Million Investment From U.S. Department of Energy

**\$440 million initiative aims to revitalize power grid and aid low-income homes**

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — In a significant move towards renewable energy, the U.S. Department of Energy has announced a \$440 million initiative to install solar panels on low-income homes in Puerto Rico. This effort comes as the U.S. territory faces persistent power outages and a deteriorating electric grid.

Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, on her sixth visit to Puerto Rico this year, revealed that the project aims to benefit up to 40,000 homes, particularly in impoverished communities. These are areas where power outages are frequent or where residents with disabilities, such as dialysis patients, rely heavily on electricity. The Department of Energy has selected a combination of

nonprofits and solar companies to execute the project.

Of the total funds, \$400 million is earmarked for three solar companies, while \$40 million will go to five nonprofit organizations. The Department of Energy anticipates that the first solar panel installations will commence early next year.

The initiative is the latest in a series of efforts to reduce Puerto Rico's reliance on fossil fuels and improve its aging electric grid. The grid, which had been neglected for decades, suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Maria in 2017 and Hurricane Fiona last year, leading to island-wide blackouts. While emergency repairs were made, the reconstruction process only began earlier this year.

“I am impatient with the grid,” stated Granholm, highlighting the urgency of the situation. “Half of your generation facilities are not working.” She referred to the challenges in restoring and modernizing the electric grid.

In December 2022, the U.S. Congress approved \$1 billion to aid in restoring Puerto Rico's grid. Additionally, a U.S. government task force has been formed to focus on enhancing the grid's resilience and efficient resource deployment. Earlier in the year, the U.S. government shipped three mega generators to the territory to provide emergency power amid ongoing outages.

Puerto Rico, which currently generates 97% of its electricity from petroleum, has set ambitious goals for renewable energy. The governor has pledged to obtain 40% of the island's power from renewable resources by 2025, increasing to 60% by 2040.