

Pentagon investigates FEMA official for manipulating Puerto Rico contracts



Washington, May 27 (RHC)-- U.S. Department of Defense is investigating Ahsha Tribble, a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) official, for allegedly manipulating contracts during the reconstruction of Puerto Rico following the devastating 2017 Hurricane Maria.

Tribble oversaw the repair of the U.S. territory's electric system and is being accused of diverting numerous multi-billion dollar contracts to Cobra Acquisitions Energy, the Wall Street Journal said in a recently published report.

She has been placed on administrative leave while the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General probes the various records.

After Whitefish Energy, Cobra received the most income with various contracts valued at US\$900 million and US\$945 million to restore downed transmissions and distribution lines. The multi-million dollar agreements were signed by the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (Prepa) and paid by FEMA. Cobra was responsible for two power outages in 2018; one due to tree trimming and the other due to an excavator.

The accused FEMA official's attorney, Leo Aldridge, said: "The federal authorities are investigating Ahsha Tribble, and Dr. Tribble states unambiguously that during the entire time she worked for FEMA in Puerto Rico, she acted appropriately within the provisions of the law and seeking the recovery of the Island.

"Dr. Tribble had no interference with which companies were awarded contracts" and denounced "any indication of inappropriate actions during her time working for FEMA in Puerto Rico."

Two other FEMA officials are also being investigated and may be removed as a result of the case. FEMA refused to comment on "matters of its staff," but said it will "comply with all the requests and investigation directed by the Office of U.S. Inspector General of the Department of National Security."

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