

## Storm debris estimate at least doubled more than originally reported

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The George County Board of Supervisors is looking to borrow up to seven million dollars to cover the costs of picking up and disposing of the debris left when Hurricane Zeta smashed its way through the county in late October. Seeking a loan in that amount was unanimously approved by the Board during its meeting on Monday.

The amount of storm debris picked up and chipped is now expected to be more than double the original estimate. Shortly after the hurricane, FEMA / MEMA personnel toured the county to assess the amount of damage and estimate the volume of debris. That estimate was 150,000 to 200,000 cubic yards of vegetative matter/building materials.

As of Monday, Tree Care LLC, the company cleaning up the debris, had picked up 217,000 cubic yards of material and was less than half done, according to Board President Henry Cochran.

Tree Care LLC, which is based in Kansas City, Kansas, was the low bidder of 20 firms that were competing for the job. Tree Care LLC bid approximately \$1.6 million to pick up and dispose of the estimated 200,000 cubic yards. It now looks like there may be as much a 400,000 – 500,000 cubic yards.

Regardless the final amount of material, FEMA will reimburse the county for 75 percent of the cost since the hurricane was declared a national disaster. MEMA will reimburse an additional 12.5 percent of the cost with the remainder coming out of county coffers.

The loan would be paid back with the FEMA and MEMA reimbursement money.