



Maryland Commission on Climate Change Adaptation & Response Working Group



**Interim Report Recommendations
December 4, 2007**



Work Plan

Develop a Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Maryland's Climate Change Vulnerability

- Task #1: Strategy Development
- Task #2: Local Government Guidance
- Task #3: Coordinate with Scientific and Technical Working Group

Initial Focus: Sea Level Rise

ARWG

Technical Working Groups

Existing Built
Environment &
Infrastructure

Future Built
Environment &
Infrastructure

Human Health, Safety
& Welfare

Resources and
Resource-Based
Industry

Statement of Intent

- Climate change and sea level rise are putting Maryland's people, property, natural resources, and public investments at risk. To protect Maryland's future economic wellbeing, environmental heritage and public safety and to guide the fundamental intent of the Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Maryland's Climate Change Vulnerability, the ARWG recommends that legislative and policy actions be instituted by the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly to:
 - Protect and restore Maryland's natural shoreline and its resources (e.g., tidal wetlands and marshes, vegetated buffers, Bay islands) that inherently shield Maryland's shoreline from the impacts of sea level rise and coastal storm events.
 - Promote programs and policies aimed at the avoidance and/or reduction of impact to the existing-built environment, as well as to future growth and development in areas vulnerable to sea level rise and its ensuing coastal hazards.
 - Avoid assumption of the financial risk of development and redevelopment in highly hazardous coastal areas.

Update Jurisdictional Boundaries of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area Act

- The Critical Area Program is one of the State's primary management tools for adapting to sea level rise.
- Jurisdictional boundaries of the Program extend 1,000' from tidal wetland boundaries as designated under the Wetlands and Riparian Rights Act.
- Under this Act, wetland boundaries are delineated from 1972 aerial photography.
- As sea level is rising, tidal wetland boundaries are changing and moving inland.
- There has been never been a comprehensive update of the tidal wetland maps or the Critical Area boundaries.



Develop a unified approach to shoreline management

- Maryland is currently losing approximately 580 acres/year to shore erosion
- Sea level rise is exacerbating existing shore erosion problems
- To better adapt, the current shoreline management framework should be modified to achieve the following:
 - Reduce amount of shoreline hardening
 - Require that shore erosion control practices be based on sound science and environmental benefit
 - Enhance Critical Area Program 100' buffer provisions
 - Resolve jurisdictional boundary issues and management conflicts



Amend the Flood Hazard Management Act to require freeboard standards in tidally influenced floodplains

- As sea level rises, the magnitude of coastal flood events will intensify.
- Elevating structures above the BFE to add additional “freeboard” can reduce flood damages.
- However, the State does not require “freeboard” standards in tidally influenced floodplains.
- All coastal counties, except some of the most vulnerable on the Eastern Shore, have adopted one-foot “freeboard” standards.
- To adapt to sea level rise, the State should require all local governments to adopt standards requiring two or more feet of “freeboard” in tidally influenced floodplains.





Lead By Example, Executive Order Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Response

- State Planning & Policy Integration
- State Land & Resource Management
- State Fiscal Allocations
- Public Education
- Performance Measurement: BayStat

Pilot Project: DNR Forest Carbon Sequestration

- Lead by Example
- Demonstration Project
- Reduce DNR's carbon footprint
- Determine how and where forest mgmt. practices can best capture carbon
- Identify funding sources & partners
- Demonstrate how long-term carbon sequestration can be achieved



ARWG Next Steps

- Select Priority Policy Options from Catalog
- Develop Straw Man Proposals for Priority Options
- Assess Local Government capacity and develop guidance
- Recommend timetable for development of sectoral-based adaptation strategies
- Complete Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Maryland's Climate Change Vulnerability