

Brief Description of Proposed Priority Options

Resources and Resource-Based Industries Technical Working Group

DRAFT

RRI-1. New criteria for identifying priority protection areas

Develop and test new and existing criteria for identifying ecologically and economically important lands (including important habitats and marsh migration corridors). This would include the use of Green and Blue Infrastructure Assessments, Priority Conservation Areas and MD Strategic Forest Lands Assessment. The objective of this option is to identify target areas where strategic actions can be focused to buffer against the impacts of sea level rise and other climate changes.

RRI-2. Community realignment plans

Encourage local governments to develop Community Realignment Plans, as a component of the comprehensive planning process. This process will direct communities to consider sea-level rise and consider the following adaptation elements:

- Phased transitions in coastal hazard areas including up- and down-scaling of density and public investment in infrastructure
- A suite of incentives and disincentives to restrict additional growth in and move existing growth out of high hazard areas
- Adaptive erosion control measures
- Wetland migration/retreat corridors
- Designated resource conservation – working lands and wildlife habitat

RRI-3. Monitoring programs

Adapt Statewide monitoring programs or create new monitoring programs to detect biological, physical and chemical responses to direct and indirect effects of climate change. Systems monitored should include forests, wetlands, streams and other surface water bodies (lakes, rivers, estuaries), ground water, indicator species and other wildlife.

RRI-4. Forest protection

Use enforcements, financial incentives, and educational outreach to retain and expand forests in the Critical Area and shoreline areas subject to storm surge and sea level rise to enhance adaptive response to climate change. The aim of this option is to develop measures that prioritize forest retention in a manner that facilitates the expansion of forest canopy and urban tree cover. The expected benefits of the retention of these forests include protection from shoreline erosion, reducing peak runoff during storm events, and avoiding stranded infrastructure.

RRI-5. Watershed planning and management

Use a watershed approach, in both urban and rural settings to plan, locate and design new development and transportation improvement projects. The aim of this measure is to include in the planning process estimations of vulnerability for new or modified infrastructure to sea level rise and storm surge. This process will consider broad floodplain management criteria such that development occurs in areas that best reduce and minimize storm and flood hazards, facilitate natural infiltration, protect/restore riparian buffers, wetlands and forests and allow wetland migration corridors.

RRI-6. New guidelines for local planning

Conduct a technical review and assessment of planning guidelines used by local communities and municipalities. The review is intended to evaluate the relevance of current guidelines and to recommend modifications considering climate change is expected to bring greater extremes in storm events and coastal flooding. The review will include a survey of local governments throughout the state to assess what is being done to prepare for sea level rise, what they perceive as barriers, and how best to share results.

RRI-7. Modify environmental protection regulations

Modify the Tidal Wetlands and Critical Areas laws and/or regulations to promote sustainable shoreline and buffer area management practices on public and private lands. These modifications should incorporate the following elements:

- A requirement for state and local governments to cooperatively develop comprehensive shore erosion management plans that provide recommended treatment options for shoreline reaches based on their physical and hydrodynamic setting.
- A requirement for permit applicants to demonstrate that their preferred erosion control alternative is least disruptive to the shoreline and critical area buffer; and has the least potential to adversely affect natural resources subject to long term erosion. To guide applicants, the State will develop a preferential order of erosion control alternatives and practices, which are presumed to progress from the least to most detrimental effect on natural resources.

- A revision enabling private land owners to rebuild storm damaged tidal marshes, including the placement of additional clean sandy fill, plants and temporary biodegradable structures to protect rebuilt areas.
- A requirement directing state agencies to jointly develop and maintain up-to-date guidelines that describe preferred shoreline and buffer management practices that will facilitate climate adaptive strategies for coastal environments subject to sea level rise, erosion and storm hazards.

RRI-8. Impacts assessment of fish stocks and habitat

Conduct an assessment of the expected impacts of sea level rise on fish habitat and fish stocks. The evaluation will also identify strategies for risk reduction.