

Delaware Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee

Membership and Responsibilities

Approved January 20, 2011

Background

Delaware experiences inundation from the sea on a regular basis. Coastal storms routinely cause flooding through the effects of storm surge and heavy rainfall. The resulting inundation causes significant social and economic impacts in the short-term. Future inundation impacts will be further exacerbated by local increases in mean sea level.

Documented data has shown that sea level has increased in Delaware by more than one foot over the past century. The conclusion of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change and the U.S. Climate Change Science Program, among others, is that the rate of sea level rise will increase over the next century. While evidence has shown that the sea level has changed dramatically over the course of time, the coastline can no longer adapt naturally as it has in the past due to human development and alterations of the landscape.

To begin planning for these impacts, a technical committee was established by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) to develop sea level rise planning scenarios. A white paper, *Recommended Sea Level Rise Scenarios for Delaware (2009)*, was drafted that summarizes the statements, guidelines and policies of federal agencies in their projections for global sea level rise. From this collection of information and data on the region's historic local sea level rise rates, the technical committee developed sea level rise planning scenarios up to the year 2100 for Delaware. A department-wide policy that directs DNREC programs to proactively consider and plan for the potential effects of coastal inundation using these future sea level rise scenarios was implemented in February 2010.

In November 2010, DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara convened the Delaware Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee to assist the DNREC Delaware Coastal Programs develop a statewide adaptation plan for sea level rise. The Delaware Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders whose organizations have an interest in preparing Delaware for the potential effects of sea level rise.

The goal of the Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee is to assess Delaware's vulnerability to current and future inundation problems that may be exacerbated by sea level rise and to develop a set of recommendations for state agencies, local governments, businesses and citizens to enable them to adapt programs, policies and business practices and make informed decisions.

Advisory Committee Membership:

The Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee shall have a diverse membership that ensures input from stakeholders throughout the State. This diverse membership is integral to developing an Adaptation Plan that can be supported by a large number of stakeholders.

As of January 2011, Advisory Committee membership included the following organizations:

Government Agencies

Delaware Department of Agriculture
Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security
Delaware Department of Transportation
Delaware Economic Development Office
Delaware Insurance Department
Delaware League of Local Governments
Delaware Legislature
Delaware Office of the Governor
Delaware Office of Management and Budget
Kent County
New Castle County
University of Delaware

Business, Environmental and Citizen Groups

Delaware Farm Bureau
Delaware League of Women Voters
Delaware Nature Society
Delaware Realtor's Association
Delaware State Chamber of Commerce
Home Builders Association of Delaware
Positive Growth Alliance
The Nature Conservancy
Tidewater Utilities

Advisory Committee membership could change and evolve throughout the adaptation plan process to provide adequate representation as necessary. The membership should remain focused to key stakeholder groups and the number of members should be kept to a manageable size. New member agencies and individuals may be invited to join the Advisory Committee by vote of the existing members. Existing Advisory Committee members can be asked to withdraw by vote or consensus of existing members if they can no longer fulfill the responsibilities of membership.

Qualifications for membership

Advisory Committee members should be individuals who regularly participate in networking and decision-making within their organization. Advisory Committee members should have a broad knowledge of the interests and activities of the agency, organization or constituent group they represent, and be able to cast votes as an Advisory Committee member on behalf of that group. Advisory Committee members should obtain the assistance of other members of their organizations or constituent groups to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities as necessary.

Alternates

Each Advisory Committee member shall designate an official alternate representative. This alternate member may participate fully in meetings (including voting) if the primary Advisory Committee member is unable to attend. The primary Advisory Committee member shall ensure that his/her alternate is kept apprised of relevant issues.

Workgroups

Workgroups of the Advisory Committee will be established as needed. Workgroups will be comprised of both selected Advisory Committee members and subject matter experts not otherwise involved in the Advisory Committee. The primary role of the Workgroups will be to thoroughly research, discuss and provide recommendations for specific issues identified by the Advisory Committee.

Advisory Committee Member Responsibilities:

Advisory Committee members (and their alternates) shall:

- Define the goals of the Delaware Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee;
- Represent, to the best of their ability, the interests and opinions of the agency, organization or constituent group which they represent;
- Communicate and consult regularly with the organizations and constituent groups which they represent to ensure that the plan meets the diverse needs and interests of all those involved;
- Share information regarding initiatives and projects that may affect the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan
- Regularly attend and participate in Advisory Committee meetings and workshops;
- Review and vote upon recommendations for Adaptation Plan development.

DNREC Responsibilities

The DNREC Delaware Coastal Programs Section will provide resources for the development and implementation of the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan. Specifically, Delaware Coastal Programs will:

- Provide planning and facilitation for meetings of the Advisory Committee and workgroups;
- Provide technical and policy advisement for meetings and plan development;
- Ensure comments, concerns and recommendations of Advisory Committee members are represented in planning products;
- Provide adequate staff resources for drafting documents;
- Ensure adequate time to Advisory Committee members to review and comment on information, recommendations and documents;
- Provide outreach and education to stakeholder organizations and other interested parties.