



# State of Delaware

## Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning

- Delaware Chamber of Commerce
- 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 Farm Bureau
- Delaware League of Women Voters
- Delaware Insurance Department
- Delaware League of Local Governments
- Delaware Legislature
- Delaware Nature Society
- Delaware Office of Management and Budget
- Delaware Office of the Governor
- Delaware Realtors Association
- Delaware State Chamber of Commerce
- Home Builders Association of Delaware
- Kent County
- The Nature Conservancy
- New Castle County
- Positive Growth Alliance
- Tidewater Utilities, Inc.
- University of Delaware

Delaware is a coastal state; its economy and quality of life have historically been linked to its shoreline, vast expanses of protected tidal wetlands and its fertile farm fields. Because of its location and link to the coast, Delaware is particularly vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels. These effects will range from increased flooding of homes during storms, increased shoreline erosion, inundation of tidal wetlands and interference with port and industrial operations.

### Adapting to Sea Level Rise

Adapting to sea level rise simply means making changes to the way we plan for the future by incorporating sea level rise considerations into our current decision-making process. Most state and local policies and regulations for flood management, emergency management, infrastructure siting, building codes and natural resource management do not yet consider the future effects of sea level rise; without considering these impacts, additional homes, infrastructure and resources may be vulnerable in the future.

Because Delaware is very likely to feel impacts from sea level rise in the coming decades, preparing for these impacts before they occur makes sense. To prepare for these impacts, an adaptation plan is being developed for the State of Delaware. This plan will provide a path forward for planning for the impacts of sea level rise.

### Role of the Advisory Committee

The Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee is comprised of a representative from each State of Delaware Cabinet Department and representatives from municipal governments, business advocacy organizations and citizen advocacy organizations.

Each representative to the Advisory Committee will consult with their agencies and constituent groups regarding sea level rise issues and bring their concerns and needs to the table for discussion and action.

The Advisory Committee will ensure that the Adaptation Plan reflects a wide-range of potential solutions to reduce risk to sea level rise impacts, and will ensure that the plan will be useful to their organization's mission.

Members of the Advisory Committee will be strongly encouraged to help implement the recommendations in the Adaptation Plan by continued collaboration with Advisory Committee organizations and others.

More information about the Advisory Committee, including meeting presentations, minutes, and documents, can be found on the Committee's website at: <http://www.swc.dnrec.delaware.gov/coastal/Pages/DESLRAdvisoryCommittee.aspx>



## An Adaptation Plan

Delaware's adaptation plan will provide an assessment of Delaware's vulnerability to the impacts of sea level rise and will provide a series of recommendations for policy improvements and best management practices. It will also illustrate which geographic areas or topic areas require more attention or research.

## Steps To An Adaptation Plan

The Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan will be developed in four basic phases:

**Issue Identification and Information Gathering:** This phase included improvements to coastal monitoring devices, improvements to Statewide elevation data and mapping of the entire state. It also included a public issues identification workshop and a survey of Delaware residents. Information gathered during this step has provided the necessary information to continue to the next phase, however data and information will be continually updated and refined.

**Vulnerability Assessment:** Using the information gathered during the first phase, a series of maps were produced showing where the high tide line will reach for different scenarios for sea level rise. Based on these maps, businesses, communities, infrastructure and habitat that are at risk will be identified and described. The Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee will assist with data collection and assessment and ad hoc work groups may be formed to involve additional experts.

**Strategy Development:** Based on the results of the vulnerability assessment, specific strategies will be developed that will reduce future risk. A workshop will be held to gather ideas from a diverse group of people. The Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee will refine and prioritize these ideas into a final Adaptation Plan. Additional opportunities for public input and comment will also be incorporated into this phase.

**Implementation:** The Adaptation Plan will not be a document that sits on a shelf. Once the plan is drafted, staff from the Delaware Coastal Programs, with Advisory Committee members and other affected agencies and individuals, will collaborate to ensure that the recommendations of the report are acted upon. Seed funding will be available to implement high priority recommendations during the first and second years of implementation and it is expected that additional grant funding can be obtained.

### For More Information:

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