



State of Delaware Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning

Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee Member Agencies:

- 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 Commissioner's Office
- Delaware League of Local Governments
- Delaware Legislature
- Delaware Nature Society
- Delaware Office of Management and Budget
- Delaware Office of the Governor
- Delaware Realtors Association
- 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.

Delaware's Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee

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, business practices and make informed decisions.

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.



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 focus or research. 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.

Steps To An Adaptation Plan

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 inundation 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 within areas that may be inundated by sea level rise have been identified. The Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee is assessing potential impacts to these resources. The committee will also obtain public input to include in their assessment.

Adaptation Strategy Development: Based on the results of the vulnerability assessment, committee members will identify options for adapting to the effects of sea level rise and will develop recommendations that can be used by state agencies, local governments businesses and citizens. Opportunities for public input and comment will also be incorporated into this phase.

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

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