



Becoming Coast-Smart

Maryland Communities Prepare for Sea Level Rise



Maryland Natural Resources Secretary John Griffin recently announced the Coast-Smart Communities Initiative, a new program to provide technical and financial assistance to areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Secretary Griffin made the announcement at an interactive summit, Building Coast-Smart Communities: How Will Maryland Adapt to Climate Change?, which was attended by more than 200 local leaders.

“With more than 4,000 miles of coastline, we cannot afford to wait to address this threat,” said Governor O’Malley. “Just as we are aggressively working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that will provide benefits long into the future, we must also ensure our communities and Maryland families are “Coast-Smart” now — ready, adaptive and resilient.”

The program was created in response to Maryland’s Climate Change Action Plan, which outlined specific actions needed to protect people and property from rising sea levels and changing

weather patterns. To increase resources at the local level, the State held a competitive grant process, through which local governments could apply for awards of up to \$75,000. State officials will also direct community leaders to technical assistance to prepare for sea level rise, coastal erosion and storm inundation.

The Coast-Smart interactive event, which was designed to create a network of energized community leaders, included a simulation based on a hypothetical situation. Facilitators mediated as participants negotiated actions their communities could take to protect their people, infrastructure, and investments from future risk. Participants learned about key choices communities face; how to anticipate risks and opportunities; how to build readiness, adaptability and resilience. The event also showcased practical tools, resources and incentives to help Maryland coastal communities become ready, adaptive and resilient in the face of climate change.

For more information visit <http://maryland.coastsmart.org/> ■

