MARYLAND COAST SMART COUNCIL

Secretary Josh Kurtz, Chair
Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Agenda
Coast Smart Council Quarter 2 Meeting

May 28, 2025 | 12:30pm -1:30pm
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401
Room C-1
OR
Meeting Link
Video call link: https://meet.google.com/tjm-dkke-grq
Or dial: (US) +1 443-671-4905 PIN: 700 595 189#

I. Welcome, Introductions & Review of Agenda **12:30 - 12:35**

Secretary Kurtz (DNR), will open the meeting, call roll, and review the agenda.

a. Action: Member approval of Feb 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes via vote
b. Materials: DRAFT_Feb_26_CSC Meeting_Notes

House of Representatives	Delegate Stein
DBM	Jason Wardrup
MDE	Matt Rowe (Jim George)
DGS	Spyros Papadimas
MDP	Chuck Boyd
MDOT	Allison Gost
Commerce	John Papavasiliou
CAC	Erik Fisher
MDEM	Jesse Delph
University System of Maryland	Dr. Fernando Miralles Wilhelm (Dave Nemazie)
Comptroller's Office	Brooke E. Lierman (Kim Pezza)
Charles County Government	Beth Groth
Gov Appointed	*Vacant*
Stantec Inc.	Rebecca Aiken
UMD Civil and Environmental Engineering	Greg Baecher
Crisfield Government	Mayor Darlene Taylor

- Quorum
- Motion by Jason Wardrup, seconded by Allison Gost
- Meeting minutes from February approved

I. Sea Level Rise and Planning Presentation 12:40 - 1:10

Molly Mitchell (Virginia Institute of Marine Science) will give a talk focused on variability and uncertainty in water level forecasts and the challenges of conveying water level forecasts in a comprehensible and actionable manner for coastal planning purposes. Drawing on experience from AdaptVA, we will explore different measures/indices for flood risk and the strengths and weaknesses of each measure. We will also look at the differences in how information is conveyed in graphs and on maps.

Action: Informative talk
Materials: Slides to be presented

- Water Level Forecasts
  - Planning design standards for buildings and roads
  - Comp plan/zoning decisions
  - Rolling observation easement/regulatory overlay
  - Time-aware permitting
- Issues
  - Changing baselines
    - Mean sea level? - We use it as our main reference point, so from a graph point it means we are talking about change over a longer time. One a map it is seen as shoreline, which can be difficult as shorelines change
      - Difficult to keep this updated in mapping
  - Uncertainty in projections
  - Annual variability
  - Flooding proceeds ahead of tides
- We can forecast water levels
  - Longterm: sea level rices (annual average water level) → more uncertainty in the future
  - Shortterm: tide, storm surge, and combined flooding (specific to the storm) → less uncertainty and variability due to tighter timeframe
- Seeing the area that will not be underwater in any model is the area we can make decisions about and use (focus on certainty instead of uncertainty)
  - Can target infrastructure in areas that are unlikely to be underwater
- If we build things just above the average, they will be underwater half the time
- Tide → much larger variations in daily tides (higher than mean often)
- If we want to trigger something at a point there is difficulty in where we want to measure them
- Requires a longterm average approach
- Best practices
  - Uncertainty is easier to constrain in a map while variability is easier to convey in a graph
  - Focus on mean sea level may leave us unprepared for flooding so we need to incorporate other flood levels into our planning
  - Good regulatory language is difficult to form from uncertain and variable future so monitoring and flexible policies are better than fixed ones
- Questions
  - On the final bullet point on regulation and policy. Have any regions incorporated language in a successful way?
    - Re: Some seem successful now, TBD in 20-30 years. Conservation Easement in the Elizabeth River → trigger that doesn't change what you are doing (when water levels reach x high we will move to another level [ex: monitor more, check conditions, layering]). Hasn't been tested really yet.
  - You mentioned mean high tide…also 100 year storm or flood. Can you help give us an understanding of what terms we should be using? 1% chance floods?

        - Re: That is a tough question. People don't seem to grasp % chance floods. If you can tie it to a benchmark that makes sense to people (shorten timeframe, ex: once a month). 100 year sounds like it won't happen often and 1% sounds like a very low chance.
    - How do modelers in the science community talk about uncertainty with the models themselves? We are charged with managing risk. We are answering what is the level of risk we are willing to accept.
        - Re: need to ask how much risk we are willing to take? None of the models are expected futures, they are all potential (if x happens then y will happen). They are all equally possible, including anything in-between extreme high and low. The concern is they are taken as "this is going to happen." We can put bounds and say where we are sure it won't be, but we can't be certain.

I. Coast Smart Regulations Update 1:10 - 1:25

Ryland Taylor (DNR) will deliver an update on the proposed new Coast Smart regulations.

Action: Informative update
Materials: None

- Coast Smart does have regulatory authority through legislation
    - Not trying to put number into regulations with this
    - Have started writing out regulations outline to hone in on exactly what we are saying
- Questions for discussion
    - Who has the ultimate say on granting exemptions?
        - Currently it says "Qualifying Agency" → who is that?
    - Who is responsible for completing the screening form?
    - What should the end of year reporting deadline be?
        - Suggestion: bi-annual review of list, some discussions on exemptions

II. Public Comment, Updates, & Next Steps 1:25 - 1:30

- No public comments
- Next Meeting: August 27, 2024 12:30-1:30

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Ryland Taylor |
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http://bit.ly/CoastSmartCouncil