

CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE COAST: PLAN TODAY TO ADAPT TOMORROW

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Coastal managers are on the front lines dealing with the impacts of climate change—sea-level rise, changing Great Lake water levels, ocean acidification, and changes in temperature and precipitation patterns. To address current climate change challenges and prepare for those ahead, some coastal managers have begun assessing their needs and planning for action. These efforts are occurring at the local, state, national, and international levels. Our session will highlight: (1) the current needs and plans of Coastal Management Programs; (2) the development of coastal climate change adaptation plans and tools; and (3) specific state and international-level adaptation measures and actions that build upon coastal managers' repertoires.

In 2008 the Coastal States Organization (CSO) surveyed coastal states, commonwealths, and territories of the United States to gain insights into their climate change adaptation planning needs, current actions, and future plans. CSO found that over half of the survey participants have begun, or will begin to develop within the next year, an adaptation planning process. Some of these on-the-ground actions that are leading towards climate change adaptation plans include: the development of official state task forces to create sea level rise and lake level change plans, the acquisition of detailed topographical data of the coastal zone, the identification of infrastructure vulnerable to climate change, and the identification of costs associated with adaptation plans and their implementation.

On an international level, the US Agency for International Development recently developed a Coastal Adaptation Guidebook for use by coastal planners around the world. Practitioners and designer have begun to use the Guidebook to glean specific adaptation measures and strategies as they put a climate change "lens" on coastal policies, investments, or community actions. For example, aspects of the guidance were incorporated into community resource management plans in the Marshall Islands and in post-hurricane redevelopment planning initiatives in Rhode Island. Nationally, NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management is developing adaptation planning guidance for state coastal managers. This guidance draws from existing state-level vulnerability assessments and adaptation strategies. At the state level, California is finishing a state-wide Climate Adaptation Strategy (CAS). The CAS will synthesize the most up-to-date information on expected climate change impacts to California for policy-makers and resource managers, provide strategies to promote resiliency to these impacts, and develop implementation plans for short and long term actions.

This panel will identify options for climate change adaptation planning and coastal manager planning needs, as well as describe early efforts to integrate this adaptation into coastal management. Facilitating this dialogue will further the coordination of local, state, and federal partners towards achievable plans for adaptation to climate change.

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