

Prepared Statement for the Committee on Energy & Commerce Democratic Field Forum:

“Climate Change on the Water’s Edge”

Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5), Annapolis, July 17, 2015

Mr. HOYER. “I thank the Ranking Member, and I thank my friend Rep. Sarbanes as well for conveying my statement to the Committee. This field forum explores a very important topic that affects the tens of millions of Americans who live along our nation’s coasts and waterways.

“Here in Maryland, the people of our state have been sustained by our close relationship with the Chesapeake Bay; the Potomac, Patuxent, and other rivers; and our Atlantic coastline. They have served as a source of food, commerce, and recreation since even before the first English settlers arrived in St. Mary’s City in 1634. Marylanders are proud of our coastal heritage, and we celebrate the skipjack, the blue crab, and the tradition of fishing among the iconic symbols of our state.

“However, all of this is under threat from the prospect of rising sea levels due to climate change. It is a threat we must take seriously. Sea level rise, a consequence of global climate change, threatens property, livelihoods, and even lives on Maryland’s coasts. Studies show that sea levels are already rising around Maryland.

“Scientists have forecasted an increase of as much as 2.1 feet in the Chesapeake Bay by 2050. And by the end of this century, that number could be 3.7 feet or greater. Here in Annapolis, which has a maritime economy and is home to the U.S. Naval Academy, the effects of sea levels rising to the predicted levels could be catastrophic. The Academy, in particular, sits right at the water’s edge, and the cost to protect its fields and facilities could be enormous over the long term.

“That’s why Congress must work with the Administration to ensure that our country is partnering with the international community to reduce carbon pollution worldwide. When our challenge is global, our solutions must be global as well. At the same time, we have a responsibility to set high standards for reducing carbon emissions and promoting energy efficiency here in our country. America should not be a follower when it comes to addressing climate change but a leader. Investing in developing and deploying cleaner and more efficient technologies will also help us grow our advanced manufacturing base and create good jobs here at home. Doing so will also make our nation less dependent on foreign sources of energy and strengthen our national security.

“I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in the Maryland delegation and Democrats serving on the Energy and Commerce Committee to keep this issue at the forefront of Congress’s attention. Together, we must ensure that Maryland and other coastal states have every advantage when it comes to building a greener economy and greener future.”