

Statement of Annapolis Mayor Michael Pantelides

**Prepared for a field forum entitled
“Climate Change at the Water’s Edge: Annapolis, MD”**

United States House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce

July 17, 2015

Good Morning Congressman Sarbanes, members of the Energy and Commerce Committee and members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation.

It is a pleasure to work along side of USNA Superintendent Vice Admiral Walter E. “Ted” Carter Jr., Will Baker of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Dr. Brenda Ekwurzel of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Welcome to Annapolis and thank you for choosing our city to demonstrate the impact of climate change on local communities and for using today’s discussion to create policies for Congress.

Annapolis saw the greatest increase in nuisance flooding during the last 50 years.

Nuisance flooding, measured in average nuisance flood days per year, increased by 925% in Annapolis, from an average of 4 nuisance floods per year to 40 per year.

Of the top ten areas based on percentage increase, Annapolis had the largest number of nuisance flood events at 40 per year, with Washington, DC a distant second at 30 nuisance floods per year.

To this end, the City of Annapolis has been meeting with local and state entities since September 2014 to address flooding in our historic city.

The City of Annapolis recently presented Weather It Together Town Hall focused on Protecting Our Historic Seaport. It is a multi-agency initiative of the City of Annapolis to develop a plan and implementation strategy, which will reduce the risk of damage or loss to private and public properties most vulnerable to the effects of climate, change. This 18-month planning effort represents an important collaborative partnership between City, State and Federal agencies and private non-profit partners.

In a Preliminary Survey asking “Who is responsible for reducing flood potential in the historic district?” 32% said that local government has responsibility for reducing flood risk and another 32% put responsibility with the State.

The good news is, we HAVE been addressing nuisance flooding as well as preparing for the next Sandy or Isabelle.

We are currently working to develop a Cultural Resource Hazard Mitigation Plan Designing, which will be a Model Resiliency and Response for Historic Properties. Along with that we are working on the Regulatory Response to Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Inundation. Meanwhile, we are currently also working on a Sea Level Rise Strategic Plan and Designing a Cultural Resources Resiliency Plan.

While we have completed a number of state funded Planning Documents and Studies, including Sea Level Rise Strategic Plan, Phase 1- Vulnerability Assessment... and Inundation Mitigation Strategies in the Eastport Area, there is still more to do and that means critical dollars are needed.

Secured Funding to Date is at \$172,398.

Still we all understand that more money is needed. The Annapolis Preliminary Planning & Design Process holds an estimated price tag of nearly 1 million dollars.

Money for flood mitigation was our number one legislative ask in 2015 and will again be our priority in 2016.

As we look toward funding opportunities in 2015, we hope for an additional \$45,000 from the National Center for Preservation Technology & Training, and in 2016 we are turning to Maryland Emergency Management Agency for funding to complete and adopt the Cultural Resource Hazard Mitigation Plan and to update of City of Annapolis Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

We are also seeking assistance from the Maryland Historical Trust and the Rockefeller 100 Resilience Cities organization.

The city of Annapolis is still considered a national model for cultural resource hazard mitigation planning - that is, no other historic district has attempted to develop a full scale FEMA mitigation plan to address Sea Level Rise and tidal flooding.

Given the importance of the historic district and the waterfront... the Annapolis response to sea level rise must focus on protecting existing structures and infrastructure.

Future planning efforts can evaluate the need and options for protecting historic structures and require floodproofing to the extent feasible while preserving the historic building exterior.

Throughout my time in office, flood mitigation has been a priority, and I appreciate the administration's close working relationship with the United States Naval Academy and the Anne Arundel County Executive.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I wish you all much success in the outcome of this hearing.