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Climate change impacts and adaptation strategie

Adaptation To Climate Change In Maryland

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In 2007, Governor Martin O'Malley signed an Executive Order establishing the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC). The MCCC was charged with developing a Climate Action Plan to address the drivers and consequences of climate change, to prepare for its ensuing impacts in the State, and to establish firm benchmarks and timetables for Plan implementation. This process used public input to formulate, analyze, and build consensus for forty-two greenhouse gas mitigation measures and a two-pronged strategy on climate change adaptation. Since completing the Climate Action Plan in 2008, Maryland State agencies have been working to implement each of the forty-two mitigation measures and have also made significant progress in advancing key components of the State's climate adaptation strategy. In order to protect local citizens from public health and safety risks and to protect public and private investments, communities should begin to plan for the impacts of climate change that our state is experiencing now and will continue to experience in the future. Climate change will affect communities and local government functions in a variety of ways. Likely impacts include an increased risk for extreme events such as drought, storms, flooding, and forest fires; more heat-related stress; the spread of existing or new vector-borne disease into a community; and increased erosion and inundation of low-lying areas along coastlines. When assessing what the future climate holds, local governments may find that many of the projected climate change impacts are in fact more extreme versions of what communities are already experiencing today as a result of present-day climate variability and extreme events. Being proactive and strategic in planning for climate change impacts can create opportunities for modifying present-day policies and practices that can increase vulnerability to climate change. Maryland has developed two strategies that are currently being used to guide and prioritize state and local-level activities with respect to both climate science and adaptation policy. The Phase I Strategy focused on sea level rise and coastal storms and was completed in 2008. The Phase II Strategy lays out a suite of actions the State should take to address changes in precipitation patterns and increased temperature and the likely impacts to human health; agriculture; bay, aquatic, forest and terrestrial ecosystems; and built-infrastructure. This presentation will discuss current progress in implementing components of both strategies, which include a wide-range of

planning, policy and regulatory components at the regional, state and local government levels.