



To: By David A. Fahrenthold

Re: Washington Post Article, East Coast May Feel Rise in Sea Levels the Most, 6/8/09

Date: June 16, 2009

Your science article, East Coast May Feel Rise in Sea Levels the Most, aptly presented the challenges of living along the Mid-Atlantic seaboard in the face of a rising ocean. Even with a modest, conservative estimate of the extent to which sea level will have an impact, there is no doubt that we must begin now to prepare for environmental changes. We must arm ourselves with the information needed to make wise decisions about protecting our coastal lives and livelihoods. There is no question that "There will probably be some very difficult decisions that have to be made."

The good news is that the wheels have already begun to turn. MACOORA, the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association, is currently providing critical, real time data to agencies involved in inundation, search and rescue, and resource management. Under the auspices of one of our key assets, the Chesapeake Bay Observing System (CBOS), a Chesapeake Inundation Prediction System (CIPS) is being developed to improve the accuracy, reliability, and capability of flood forecasts for tropical cyclones and non-tropical wind systems such as nor'easters. Investigators from government, industry (such as WeatherFlow, Inc.) and academia, including the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Old Dominion University, and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science have joined together to construct and deliver a prototype inundation forecasting system. The system will facilitate emergency management and decision-making in the challenging case of intricate coastlines-semi-enclosed coastal bays and estuaries. It is expected that this capability will be made available to the NOAA National Weather Service in 2011.

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