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The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development today announced New Jersey as one of 40 finalists of Phase I of the [National Disaster Resilience Competition](#) (NDRC) and invited the state to move forward to the second and final phase of the competition.

In its [initial application](#), submitted in March, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection focused on creating replicable pilot projects that address the flooding risks in estuarine communities. The layered flood risk reduction measures proposed ranged from home elevation to preservation and restoration of wetlands to buyouts of homes in flood-prone areas. In Phase 2 of the competition, the state will propose specific pilot projects and articulate their design and means of implementation. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the Phase 2 draft application, which needs to be submitted by Oct. 27, 2015.

"Given New Jersey's position of vulnerability, with 60 percent of its residents living on or near the coast, we are pleased HUD recognizes our urgent need to mitigate flood risks," said New Jersey Future Executive Director Peter Kasabach. "DEP's National Disaster Resilience Competition application offers tremendous opportunity to obtain additional federal funds to make New Jersey more resilient to future storms and flooding events."

Among the outcomes for which New Jersey Future is advocating are resilient solutions that can withstand the impacts of future storms, based on projected sea-level rise and associated flooding. New Jersey Future is also urging the NJDEP to ensure that its application have a strong equity component. Because vulnerable residents, including seniors, minorities, those with lower incomes, and the disabled, often have fewer resources to recover from and adapt to a changing climate, it is imperative that any proposed project addresses their special needs.

"Creating stronger social systems is a key component of any successful resiliency project," said New Jersey Future Policy Manager Megan Callus. "We would like to see an emphasis on engaging the community in the development and implementation of the project.

"Identifying who is benefiting and ensuring the project doesn't reinforce the systems that created the initial risks and inequalities should be a primary goal of any project moving forward," she concluded.

The NDRC began on Sept. 17, 2014, when HUD announced the competition for \$1 billion in funding. Modeled on the Rebuild By Design effort, the goal of the competition is to help

communities recover from natural disasters and improve their ability to prepare and withstand future disasters. The completion is structured in two phases: (1) risk assessment and planning; and (2) design and implementation.

New Jersey has 120 days to submit the Phase 2 application. HUD anticipates announcing the winners in early 2016. The Phase 1 application and information regarding the competition [can be found here](#).

Other applicants invited to the final round of the competition include New York State, New York City, Alaska, Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.