



Testimony on S1333
Senate Environment and Energy Committee
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S1333 Requires DEP to Update Shore Protection Master Plan

Chairman Smith and members of the committee,

New Jersey Future, a nonpartisan nonprofit that promotes policies for sustainable growth and development in New Jersey, supports S1333 requiring DEP to update the Shore Protection Master Plan. For the past five years we have been providing direct assistance to coastal communities seeking to recover from Hurricane Sandy and have gained considerable experience in the area of risk assessment and resiliency planning.

Almost every year for the past two decades, New Jersey has experienced a presidential-declared flood-related disaster at some location along our coast. The frequency of these events offers clear evidence that coordinated, decisive strategies to address climate change risk are warranted. But periodic storms don't represent the only coastal threats. New Jersey towns experience chronic flooding during high tides, regularly devastating both homeowners and businesses. And projections indicate that, within the foreseeable future, both recurring and episodic flooding will only grow more severe. We cannot afford to waste more time; we must revisit our plans to safeguard shores now, and we **appreciate Senator Gopal's intention to update this plan.**

While it is helpful to maintain an inventory of completed, planned, and denied shore protection projects, as required in the current draft bill, we need to take a comprehensive and future-focused approach to achieving meaningful shoreline protection. We therefore respectfully recommend amendments to require:

1. An updated Shore Protection Master Plan that matches the scope of the original plan and that provides direction for and is coordinated with county and local hazard mitigation and adaptation planning.
2. A clear and enforceable plan of action for protection, including defined metrics to track compliance.
3. Establishment of uniform sea-level-rise standard and sea-level-rise projections.
4. Provision of financial assistance, guidance, and data to enable municipalities to evaluate current and future risks so that they can determine effective long-term resiliency strategies and coordinate such strategies with their master plans, land use and development regulations, and capital investment plans.

5. Consideration of land use management alternatives, including risk-based land acquisition and development transfer, as a means of risk reduction.
6. Alignment of state programs and incentives that consider sea-level rise, storm surge, and flooding as key factors for facility siting for state infrastructure and permits, and for any state infrastructure assistance programs for municipal infrastructure
7. Promotion of nature-based as well as gray infrastructure solutions.

The environmental, economic, and social costs associated with sea-level rise and climate change impacts in New Jersey will, without question, be enormous. It is therefore essential that we develop a carefully designed, long-range, forward-looking plan that addresses risk effectively and charts a responsible course of action to mitigate or avoid these impacts.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of protecting our shore through an updated comprehensive planning process. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the foregoing recommendations and are happy to work with you on this and other critical environmental protection legislation.