



# A SAFER NEW YORK STATE

## FOLLOWING THROUGH ON A RESILIENT VISION FOR NEW YORK

### Background

**Climate change is not abstract for our region. More than one million people across New York and New Jersey live at risk of flooding today. Yet, eight years after Hurricane Sandy, we are still unprepared. What is at stake? Your home, your business, your school, your park, your neighborhood, and your way of life. Delaying action is not an option. Now is the time to address the greatest threat to our region's future.**

**The Rise to Resilience campaign is today's roadmap for a more resilient tomorrow. Together we can build resilience, support our communities and economy and create a more equitable and just region.**

**Please join us at [rise2resilience.org](http://rise2resilience.org).**

### Issue overview

Since Hurricane Sandy struck, strong commitments have been made to greenhouse gas reduction and a state sea level rise standard—but we remain unprepared for the sea level rise we face in any scenario. We need to ensure that the state pursues previous legislative commitments, develops a clear and proactive approach to climate resilience and effectively reduces risk in a manner that is equitable, just and green.

The Governor of New York and state legislature can make key changes now, beginning with a robust implementation of the Climate Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRA) of 2014.

Rise to Resilience recommends the following actions to begin developing a full framework for implementing climate resilience projects in partnership with communities, local hazard mitigation and watershed planners and a regional resilience commission.

**ACTION:**  
**Leverage the Community Risk and Resiliency Act to enact stronger climate risk assessment and resilience throughout New York State.**

**To reduce our risk of flooding and strengthen the CCRA, New York State Should:**

> **Revise management structures to match the challenge** and ensure effectiveness in facilitating risk reduction. These changes should include the following actions:

- > Establish a chief resilience officer position.
- > Increase efficiencies between, and potentially merge, the Coastal Zone Management Program, the Climate Smart Communities program and relevant Department of Conservation programs/staff into a well-funded climate resilience office to foster coordinated preparedness and adaptation planning.
- > Develop a permanent state program for flood mitigation, including elevations, buyout and floodplain restoration.

> **Develop model local laws and guidance for resilience planning and zoning.**

Local governments need clear guidance for integrating climate into specific, enforceable standards for land use, infrastructure development and buildings in areas of future flood risk. Without a coordinated approach across public and private lands, uneven resilience measures result in islands of protection and segments of vulnerability. The state should establish a framework using flood risk maps for localities with the aim of reducing at risk infrastructure. This should include policy tools such as rolling easements to facilitate relocation and transition from areas at high risk of permanent inundation into restored floodplains, natural habitat corridors and publicly-accessible open spaces over time.

> **Provide a suite of financing and incentive strategies** (e.g., PACE) for implementing local resilience projects and exceeding code requirements.

> **Develop or adopt existing guidelines from the National Association of Climate Resilience Planners for equitable adaptation policies and projects.**<sup>1</sup>

> **Establish future flood risk maps** (or expand special hazard areas) as a basis for standards for planning, land use regulation and incentives, using these maps to inform permitting guidance<sup>2</sup>.

> **Integrate specific permit review criteria for climate change** into all relevant agency guidance.

**ACTION:**  
**Incentivize resilient natural shorelines**

New York State, working with the legislature as necessary should incentivize resilient natural shorelines through simplified or expedited permitting, building off of existing models in New Jersey (GP 24) and Maryland, so that it is easier to construct a living shoreline than replacement with an in-kind hard measure.

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Climate Resilience Planners. 2017. [Community-Driven Climate Resilience Planning: a Framework, Version 2.0](#).

<sup>2</sup> Clear guidance for hazard risk assessment, planning, and project development should accompany maps. At a minimum, moderate or high sea level rise projections should be used for regulatory purposes.

**ACTION:**  
**Integrate resilient design and process into all state-funded infrastructure planning and capital projects.**

**The State Should:**

- > **Revise the Uniform Construction Code for resilience** to ensure all new public and private construction and significant retrofits occurring in the future floodplain meet climate design guidelines based on potential impacts to frontline communities and consideration of wildlife and habitat vulnerability.
- > **Expand the Climate Action Council and Climate Justice Working Group** to include resilience experts from frontline communities to oversee the implementation of resiliency efforts, compensating them for their expertise and time.
- > **Formalize an interagency council on climate resilience**, led by appointed chief climate resilience officers from key state agencies (e.g., DEC, DOS, DHSES, DOH), charged with:
  - > Ensuring integration of resilience guidelines and permitting across agencies;
  - > Tracking and reporting on progress toward broader climate mitigation and resilience goals to the Climate Action Council, Climate Justice Working Group and broader public;
  - > Coordinating closely with the Hazard Mitigation Planning Process; and
  - > Developing and regularly updating a strategic plan.