

Joint Subcommittee to Formulate Recommendations to Address Recurrent Flooding

May 12, 2015, Meeting Summary

The Joint Subcommittee to Formulate Recommendations to Address Recurrent Flooding (the Joint Subcommittee), formed pursuant to HJ 16 (2014) and SJ 3 (2014), held its initial meeting of the second year of its two-year study in Richmond on Tuesday, May 12, 2015.

The Joint Subcommittee is tasked with formulating recommendations for the development of a comprehensive and coordinated planning effort to address recurrent flooding, including recommendations for short-term and long-term strategies for minimizing the impact of recurrent flooding. Final recommendations will be presented to the 2016 Session of the General Assembly.

Staff began the meeting by reviewing the status of Joint Subcommittee–related legislation introduced during the 2015 Session. The 2015 Session review may be found on the Joint Subcommittee's website:

http://dls.virginia.gov/interim_studies_flooding.html

The Joint Subcommittee then heard from Col. Paul B. Olsen, P.E., Norfolk District Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers. Col. Olsen provided an update of Corps activities and explained available Corps funding programs. Details of Col. Olsen's presentation are posted on the Joint Subcommittee's website. Col. Olsen, who is retiring this year from his current position with the Corps, received thanks from the members of the Joint Subcommittee as well as members of the audience for his efforts and many accomplishments in the Norfolk District.

The Joint Subcommittee was also addressed by Curtis Brown, Chief Deputy State Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM.) Mr. Brown reviewed VDEM's pending application with the HUD National Disaster Resilience Grant Competition. The purpose of the grant program is "to provide resources to help communities plan and implement disaster recovery that makes them more resilient to future threats while improving quality of life and making communities more resilient to economic stresses or other shocks." (HUD NDRC Guidance) Sixty-seven applicants are eligible to apply for \$ 817 million from the general pool on the basis of an unmet need attributable to at least one of the five qualifying disasters between 2011 and 2013.

The purpose of Virginia's grant application is to develop best strategies for building resilient communities across a range of environments by developing the model seaport region that derives its economic vitality from the water. The target area for the Commonwealth's effort is the Hampton Roads area, including the Eastern Shore. VDEM has submitted its application as part of Phase 1 and expects to hear from HUD shortly regarding eligibility to compete in Phase 2 of the competition.

Joint Subcommittee member Nikki Rovner then provided an update on the work of the Governor's Climate Change Commission (the Commission). Ms. Rovner, who also serves on the Commission and will

act as a liaison between the two groups, explained that the Commission has created several work groups that are expected to make preliminary recommendations at the Commission's July meeting.

The next meeting of the Joint Subcommittee has been scheduled for July 21, 2015, to be held in Richmond.