



Briefing Notice

Losing Ground: Managing Climate Risks in the Southeast

Thursday, May 22, 2014

10 AM – 11:30 AM

428 Russell Senate Office Building

Please RSVP to expedite check-in: www.eesi.org/052214southeast#rsvp

The **Environmental and Energy Study Institute** (EESI) invites you to a briefing examining the current and projected impacts of climate change in the Southeast, and efforts to manage these risks. According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, the Southeast region has experienced more billion-dollar natural disasters than any other region in the United States, primarily from hurricanes, but also from tornadoes and winter storms. Climate change will increase the frequency and strength of such extreme weather events. Coastal areas in the Gulf already grapple with hurricane damages that cost an average \$14 billion a year, and conservative estimates project that these costs could rise to \$23 billion by 2030, with 50 percent of this increase attributable to climate change. Rising sea levels also have the potential to create widespread damage. The Third National Climate Assessment (NCA) projects between 1 to 4 feet of sea level rise by 2100, and many of the region's major cities are in low-lying, coastal areas, as are critical highways, trade ports, and military installations. Speakers for this forum are:

- **Dr. Virginia Burkett**, Chief Scientist for Global Change, U.S. Geological Survey
- **Roger Natsuhara**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy, Installations and Environment, Department of the Navy
- **Rear Admiral (sel) Tim Gallaudet**, Deputy Oceanographer of the Navy, Department of the Navy
- **Robert Kafalenos**, Environmental Protection Specialist, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

The Third National Climate Assessment, which was released May 6, defines the Southeast as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. This diverse region is highly vulnerable to sea level rise, extreme heat waves and decreased water availability, which can lead to damaged infrastructure, reduced agricultural yield and saltwater intrusion into fresh water supplies. Many cities in the region are especially vulnerable to sea level rise and land subsidence, including New Orleans, Miami, Tampa, Charleston, Virginia Beach and Rincon, PR.

The Southeast is also critical to the nation's military security. Virginia is home to Norfolk Navy Base, the world's largest naval base, and Hampton Roads, the only domestic site which manufactures aircraft carriers. Increasing land subsidence in Virginia, combined with sea level rise, exposes these important facilities to flooding during storms and high tides.

The Gulf carries 40 percent of U.S. waterborne cargo and two-thirds of U.S. oil imports through major ports and critical inland infrastructure. It is estimated that a 90-day shutdown of Louisiana's State Highway 1, which carries oil and gas resources inland, would cost the U.S. economy a staggering \$7.8 billion. Adaptation and resilience efforts are crucial for asset protection, continued economic development, and infrastructure planning. While local officials throughout the Southeast have often taken the lead in resilience efforts, the National Climate Assessment finds that a coordinated, national effort is needed in order to protect this vulnerable region.

This event is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Jessie Stolark at jstolark@eesi.org or (202) 662-1885

