

White House Officials Visit Wetlands Project in Wilmington as part of the President's Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience

(Wilmington) The Chair of the [White House Council on Environmental Quality](#), Nancy Sutley and David Agnew, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs visited Wilmington today to get a firsthand look at a wetlands restoration and mitigation project site that will restore 22-acres of wetlands in the Southbridge neighborhood of South Wilmington. Governor Markell, Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Collin O'Mara, Wilmington Mayor Dennis Williams, and local legislators, including Hanifa Shabazz, Wilmington City Council, 4th District, highlighted plans for the project that will reduce flooding in one of the most economically-challenged communities in the state.

The visit came on the heels of the President's announcement [last Friday](#) of a Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience that will advise the Administration on how the Federal Government can respond to the needs of communities dealing with impacts of climate change. Governor Markell was one of eight Governors appointed by President to serve on the Task Force.


In September, Governor Markell signed [Executive Order 41](#) which requires all state agencies to incorporate measures for adapting to more extensive storms, increased flood heights and sea level rise in the siting and design of projects for construction of new structures and reconstruction of

substantially damaged structures and infrastructure.

Quotes from officials during today's visit:

Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality: Climate change is changing the frequency and intensity of flooding, wildfires, storms, and heat waves and threatening our health. This project is critical to protecting this community from future floods. It's fitting to be here in Delaware because of the leadership of the Governor, the Natural Resources Secretary and the Mayor to take action to protect communities from potentially destructive climate impacts. We can count on Delaware for innovative ideas.

David Agnew, White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs: "The President believes we have a moral obligation to leave this planet better than we found it. Across America, states, cities and communities are innovating and making the changes they need to deal with the effects of extreme weather and other climate impacts. The Governor's Executive Order is a great example of what states are doing. Intergovernmental cooperation is key to help ensure the federal government is doing all we can to support these efforts."

Governor Markell: As the lowest-lying coastal state in the nation, Delaware is extremely vulnerable to climate impacts. We have a long history of challenges from erosion and flooding, which will be exacerbated by more intense storms and rising sea levels. In Southbridge, we have seen record flooding that has forced evacuations and temporary closure of some businesses. While there have been flooding challenges in Southbridge for many years, more frequent storms and heavier precipitation are making things worse. We are focused on taking strategic actions that will help transition Delaware from a position of vulnerability to one of preparedness and  resilience.

Collin O'Mara, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control: "This is a perfect example of the type of project we need to encourage across the

state and country. We are creatively working across governments to leverage existing resources to restore wetlands so they will absorb flood waters and protect this community from water damage. We will see more intense storms, greater precipitation, higher heat waves, and accelerated sea level rise that will affect communities like this one. States that prepare for climate impacts will be the most competitive in the years ahead.

The first meeting of the President's [Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience](#) will take place in December.

Photos of the event can be viewed on [Flickr](#)