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Residents invited to discuss long-term policies on coastal flooding and sea-level rise

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MD – In the next two weeks, 10,000 county residents will receive an invitation in the mail to participate in a unique citizens' discussion on coastal flooding and sea-level rise as part of the Future Coast initiative. The daylong event, to take place on April 28th in Severna Park, will engage residents in conversation on policy and coastal flooding using small group discussions and a new online visualization that maps local impacts.

In attending the event, residents will have an opportunity to discuss with fellow community members their perceptions of coastal flooding now and in the future and what local governments might do in the long-term to address it. Science and policy experts will attend the event to answer their questions. Participants' preferences for strategies to limit the impacts of coastal flooding will be compiled into a report and shared with local officials and media in June 2012. Additional details about the community session will be provided to invitees when they confirm their attendance.

By mailing a random sample of addresses within the county, project organizers hope to attract a representative group of residents to attend the interactive session and complete the accompanying survey. Attendees of the daylong session on April 28th will receive a \$50 VISA gift card as a thank you.

A team at George Mason University is leading the initiative, in collaboration with researchers at the U.S. Naval Academy and Center for the Study of Local Issues at Anne Arundel Community College. The visualization and online site is being developed by Dewberry, a regional engineering firm. Funding for the project is from Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant.

A toolkit of materials from the community session -- including the online impacts visualization -- will be made publicly available in Summer 2012 at www.FutureCoast.info.

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