Sixth Annual Climate Leadership Summit

National Institute for Coastal and Harbor Infrastructure
October 1, 2014

www.NICHIusa.org
New York City October 29, 2012
The Triple Threat of Rising Sea Levels, Extreme Storms and Aging Infrastructure

The Challenge

• Threat to Our National Security
• Threat to our Home Land Security
• Threat to our National Economic Security
It is time to Totally Re-Imagine our Coasts

- To Protect our Coastal Communities
- To Protect, Preserve and Nurture on Natural Coastal Environment
- To Invest in the Globally Competitive Economic Future of the 22nd Century
We Know It’s Time to Act

• 30 Years of Warning from the Scientific Community:
  – warming temperatures,
  – tide gauge measurements,
  – increased flooding incidents,
  – increased severity of storms, the Tragic Impacts of Katrina and Sandy …Hundreds of lives lost and more than $200 billion dollars in losses

• As Mike Boots said yesterday,
  “We now have Actionable Data”!

• Why don’t we Act?
To effectively communicate a “call to action” across sectors and develop effective strategies that will form the political will to act, we must understand that we face a New Reality.
The New Reality of Rising Sea Levels, Extreme Storms and Aging Infrastructure

• As Kristin Jacobs said yesterday, “Our Infrastructure was built for a different reality”.
• It is also true that:
• Our national policies were built for a different reality
• Our Governance Structures were Built for a different reality
• Perhaps most troubling our minds were built for a different reality
Moving Forward from the Old Reality to the New Reality

We must use the Old Reality of how we think as a species and as a body politic

* We are intuitive, experiential thinkers
* We engage in cognitive dissonance
* We calculate with hyperbolic discounting
* We procrastinate
* Too many political leaders kick the can beyond their terms in office
Americans will act when they believe there is a Crisis and a clear Objective.
Crisis and Clear Objective=Action

• The Great Depression = The New Deal
• World War II = Unconditional Surrender
• Recession Bound and stuck in the Mud + FHA
• Space = A Man on the Moon
• The Environmental Crisis = EPA
• The Dirtiest Harbor in America = Creation of the MWRA and the Boston Harbor Cleanup
The New Reality requires
New Leadership
New Government Structures

Local Governments are leading the way
- The Regional Compact is the Template

The Need for a New Federal Role
Local Government Cannot be Successful without
New Federal Leadership and Funding
National Institute for Coastal and Harbor Infrastructure

The New Federal Role: NICHI’s Three Goals

1. Change National Policy from Respond and Repair to Plan and Invest
2. Establish Single Agency Federal Leadership
3. New Federal Funding with Dedicated Revenues
Moving Key Stakeholders to Action
Building Political Will in The New Reality

• Four Key Constituencies- Four Strategies
  – Coastal Communities
  – Business
  – Inside the Beltway (OMB, GCBO, GAO, Committee Staff and elected officials)
  – General Public
Leadership Requires Courage
Congress Get Out of Her Way!
"We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change, and the last generation that can do something about it."

President Obama