

## SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM RULE AMENDMENTS: Preliminary Draft (4 of 5)

### Sea level rise

This document presents Ecology's approach to addressing planning for sea level rise in local Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs). Preliminary draft amendments<sup>1</sup> include a recommendation that local governments consult Ecology guidance on emerging issues such as sea level rise during locally-initiated reviews of their master programs.

#### Introduction

Part of Ecology's rulemaking scope included potentially expanding provisions addressing coastal hazards such as sea level rise. Ecology consulted with a local government Sounding Board on proposed amendments and held a day-long sea level rise workshop with technical experts and local governments that are actively addressing sea level rise adaptation in their communities.

After considering various perspectives and options, Ecology proposes to continue our existing technical assistance approach, rather than providing detailed recommendations in rule.

We have learned from local governments that there are many ways to evaluate and minimize the risks from sea level rise. Different types of analyses and actions will be appropriate, depending on the level of planning effort and availability of information and data.

Adaptation responses are being addressed through local comprehensive plans, flood ordinances, stormwater management, infrastructure planning, evaluations of utility and service capacity, and other activities. Local governments are in the best position to determine how SMP amendments should be incorporated into their overall sea level rise response strategy.

Local governments that have embraced planning for sea level rise point out that shoreline jurisdiction is limited to 200 feet from the waters edge, which in many circumstances is too narrow to incorporate a comprehensive approach to sea level rise adaptation planning. Typical responses to sea level rise apply both inside and outside shoreline jurisdiction, and may not require amendments to the SMP. The SMP is one tool that can be used in conjunction with other planning programs to comprehensively address sea level rise through mitigation, adaptation, and growth management.

#### Improving guidance

Ecology is enhancing existing guidance to better address local government needs related to sea level rise. Ecology's existing guidance on [Addressing Sea Level Rise in Shoreline Master Programs](#)<sup>2</sup> will be revised to reflect more recent examples and approaches.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is updating rules implementing the Shoreline Management Act (SMA). Ecology is seeking comments on preliminary draft rule amendments during summer 2016 before initiating formal rule-making in winter 2016.

Please send comments by August 26, 2016, at 5:00pm. Instructions are at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/rules/1506ov.html>

For other questions contact [Michelle Wilcox](#) at (360) 407-7676.

<sup>1</sup> Ecology's rule amendments are required by RCW 90.58.060.

<sup>2</sup> Shoreline Master Program Handbook, Appendix A, 2010

In partnership with Washington Sea Grant, Ecology has developed the [Washington Coastal Hazards Resilience Network](#), dedicated to improving regional coordination and collaboration. The network currently includes over 60 members of state and federal agencies, local governments, tribes, academic institutions, consultants, and nonprofit organizations involved with reducing risk in coastal communities. This network is open to and available as a resource for local governments.

The [Coastal Training Program](#) helps planners and coastal managers gain a better understanding of environmental issues, science, and environmental regulations. Ecology has partnered with the UW Climate Impacts Group and Washington Sea Grant to develop a series of climate adaptation trainings. The series helps planners and coastal managers address existing and future impacts of shoreline change by providing a locally relevant, in-depth, sequential curriculum on adaptation planning as well as helpful resources (e.g., visualization, modeling, and decision support).

### For information

For information and technical resources or to be added to the Coastal Hazards Resilience Network, contact [Bobbak Talebi](#) at (360) 407-7199.

## Preliminary draft amendments related to sea level rise

The following is a summary of Ecology’s preliminary draft amendments to WAC 173-26-090 to incorporate new direction to consult Ecology guidance documents on sea level rise. New language is shown in underline. Deletions are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

**Please see the related paper on periodic reviews of SMPs for a full description of proposed amendments to this section of rule.**

This amendment references Ecology guidance as a source of new information on emerging topics, with sea level rise included as an example. This acknowledges that Ecology will help local governments determine what “new information” on emerging topics may be applicable to their jurisdiction. Using sea level rise as an example draws attention to this important topic. Including this language under “locally-initiated master program review” emphasizes that the need for SMP amendments should be determined locally as part of each local government’s overall approach to reduce risks from sea level rise.

### (1) Locally-initiated master program review

(a) Each local government should periodically review a its shoreline master program under its jurisdiction and make amendments to the master program deemed necessary to reflect changing local circumstances, new information or improved data. Local governments are encouraged to consult department guidance for applicable new information on emerging topics such as sea level rise.