

**Secretary Michael S. Regan**

**Kick-off: Advancing Nature-based Stormwater Strategies in North Carolina to Reduce Flooding and Improve Water Quality**

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

Today's participation demonstrates your dedication to this important topic, as well as your commitment to protecting your health and the health of all North Carolinians ... which is our primary concern right now. That's what your work in the Nature-based Stormwater Strategies Working Groups is about as well -- protecting North Carolinians. So, I want to thank you for being part of this process and contributing your time and expertise.

Climate change is the greatest challenge we face, globally – and right here in North Carolina. And preparation for future events will be critical for our success.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Florence, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order 80 ... **the most ambitious step ever taken in North Carolina's history to combat climate change and transition North Carolina to cleaner energy while keeping the economy in mind.**

Executive Order 80 reaffirmed our commitment to the goals of the Paris Accord Agreement as global citizens. It called for every cabinet agency to develop a carbon reduction strategy, a 40 percent reduction of statewide greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2025, and Governor Cooper tasked our department with the development of a North Carolina Clean Energy plan to ensure we met those goals and beyond.

As a state we are committed to taking action now, to leading the national conversation, so that we can mitigate the impacts of climate change. Just this month, North Carolina's climate experts submitted the state's first Climate Science report to show exactly how much climate change could continue to impact our state.

The science tells us that if we do nothing – we'll see more intense storms. But we aren't just worried about hurricanes. Rainfall events will be heavier and sea level rise will impact our coastal communities. Some neighborhoods already see 'sunny

day flooding' and king tides that are higher than they have been in years past. Farmers are dealing with saltwater intrusion further inland than before. All of that, is why the Governor requested a statewide Risk and Resilience Plan as part of Executive Order 80. We have a responsibility to mitigate the damages caused by these storms and shifting weather patterns...**and to make our communities more resilient.**

We have to rebuild stronger and smarter and ensure we can withstand the climate impacts of the future. What we know is that we have to act now. We cannot do the same old things and expect a different result. We have the opportunity to address flood risk and water quality and to make our communities safer. And that's good for the people of North Carolina and for our economy. What you are doing today is critical to our state's success. We appreciate your input and I look forward to seeing your recommendations on how Nature-based Stormwater Strategies can help make North Carolina more resilient. Thank you all for dedicating your time and effort to such an important topic for our state.