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Sandy Blue Acres Buyout Program
Bureau Chief, NJDEP State Land Acquisition
Director, Blue Acres Buyout Program
New Jersey: Densely Populated and Flood Prone*

* #1 Hazard is Flooding (FEMA, Aug. 2004)
Predicted Impact of Climate Change on New Jersey*

- Environmental
  - 67% of 1,800 miles of shoreline vulnerable to erosion.
- Economic
  - $16 billion in tourism including fishing, boating and beaches
- Societal
  - Disadvantaged populations disproportionately affected

*4th National Climate Assessment, Nov. 2018
New Jersey’s Three Approaches to Mitigation

REBUILDING

N. Wildwood, 2016

ACQUISITIONS

Downe Twp., 2018

ELEVATIONS

Highlands, 2017
Buyouts: Removing NJ Families from Harm’s Way

- Blue Acres established in 1995 through bond referendum.
- Initially, 100% state-funded; Federal funding as of 2010.
- Tasked in 2013 with Superstorm Sandy acquisitions.
- Focused on purchasing and removing clusters of homes to enhance flood mitigation.
Blue Acres’ Results

Marsh-side in Sayreville

Mid-neighborhood removal in Sayreville
Challenges on the Delaware Bay Shore

Pre-demo in Downe

Post-demo in Downe

Pre-demo in Lawrence

Post-demo in Lawrence
Success in Woodbridge, NJ

- Grassroots effort combined with cooperative officials
- Three rounds of buyouts = nearly 200 properties
- New ordinance provides stricter codes for new construction and no re-sale unless elevated
- Partnering with Rutgers State University on comprehensive site restoration plan
Post-Demo Land Use and Restoration

Woodbridge Restoration Concept

Woodbridge Restoration Underway
Lessons and Hurdles

• New Jersey was prepared for buyouts before Superstorm Sandy.

• Folks hesitant to leave their home, even under dire conditions.

• Process is easier when local officials believe/promote the value of buyouts.

• Grassroots efforts by homeowners are critical to success.

• Confront hurdles by building capacity.
Thank you!