



## **FOCUS 2015**

### **Gov Parris Glendening presentation**

Good morning. Bon Jour.

Thank you Lisa (Friedman, Deputy Editor of ClimateWire) for that kind introduction.

I am pleased to be here with you today and to participate in this important event. I was able to attend a few sessions from yesterday's program and was impressed by the level of discourse.

I expect the outcomes of today's program to be just as beneficial.

I thank the French Ambassador (Gerard Araud) and the others who have worked to put this event together.

The issues we are here to discuss – Sustainability and resiliency– are universally relevant AND URGENT.

Time is not on our side.

Climate change *is* happening,

and is a result *of* human activity, and - - particularly for the United States the cause is our land use and development patterns...that, of course, is not news to you in this room.

The sprawling patterns of growth that have spread across the United States for the better half of the last century, are unsustainable — both economically and environmentally —,

but also, do not match how the majority of Americans want to live.

To address the growing concern of climate change, we must develop differently - - we must adhere to a model of sustainable growth.

Focusing on more compact development and making informed decisions about what land to develop and what land to preserve serves the dual purpose of; building community resiliency to the effects of climate change, and creating truly sustainable cities that meet economic, environmental, and social goals.

Through the use of good planning and innovation, city leaders can address the role of core infrastructure, development, and innovation on the resilience of their communities.

Instead of constantly being in a state of reaction to the latest drought, hurricane, or other climate change-induced disaster, our communities can better withstand the impacts of more severe weather, simply by changing the development choices we have made.

Many have already realized that to address the reality of the changing extreme weather we have to do things differently.

We cannot continue to focus solely on recovery or one-off mitigation, but must broaden our approach and leverage our investments for triple bottom line returns, by promoting biking, walking, and transit, and utilizing existing buildings and infrastructure as well using infill and mixed use development.

The best way to reduce the carbon emissions of the automobile, after all, is not to improve the car, but to reduce the need to drive it everywhere.

In cities built for cars, you are forced to get into a 2000- pound machine to drive 3-miles to get 1- quart of milk.

If we can begin to reduce our emissions more effectively we may move closer to a system of Nega-watts, or the measure of the amount of energy saved instead of consumed.

Communities across the U.S., and around the world, are taking sustainability, energy efficiency, and green building into their own hands, setting their own individual goals, and mandating their own policies, and acting independently of national action and inaction.

New York City, for example, home to over 8.4 million people, has committed to reducing carbon emissions by 80% below 2005 levels by 2050 - - the largest city in the world to commit to this goal.

Many other cities across the U.S. have set their own emission reduction goals.

Salt Lake City, Utah - - to name another - - has been a leader in urban sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction, setting a carbon reduction goal of 50% by 2040, and starting the process of implementation by incorporating sustainability into over 100 city ordinances and focusing on transit, renewable energy, green infrastructure, and sustainable building policies and this from the one of the most conservative states in America.

We see other examples of great leadership in:

Boulder, Colorado where devastating wildfires and flooding have led to an intensified focus on resiliency. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which is working to become a livable, sustainable, multi-modal city. Or Carmel, Indiana which has become a model for how to retrofit a suburb for sustainability, including bike lanes, a hybrid city vehicle fleet, encouraging walkability and higher density development. Leaders from French municipalities are showing the same leadership.

Compared with technological solutions to climate change, rebuilding cities is slow work.

It is also not simple.

Urban sustainability will involve some very difficult political choices, but with over half of the world's population now living in cities we cannot afford to **not** make changes.

Years of structuring our laws and regulations to promote the increasingly outdated sprawl building model, makes development policy changes difficult.

Many people still resist simple zoning as government interference, and defend sprawl as the American Dream; forgetting that the suburban expansion of the last fifty years was not a creature of the free market, It was financed by government, through massive funding for highways and federally-financed suburban home mortgages, among many other programs.

Today, however, one of the most important forces promoting more sustainable development and innovation is market demand.

We see evidence of this demand, in - -

The growing baby boomer population who prefers to age in place.

The better part of 90 million millennials coming on line and choosing to settle in smart growth locations.

The marked rise in the knowledge-based economy.

More and more communities recognizing placemaking as an important economic development tool.

The discussion of disaster mitigation and management cannot be left to only the scientists and environmentalists. It must be brought into the debate on land use, economic development, energy security, and equitable and just opportunity.

If we fail to adequately address the needs of disaster management, it will be increasingly hard to achieve the goals of a sustainable society, and the costs of adaptation will rise;

Particularly given that progress towards global climate agreement and action has lagged painfully behind need.

The majority of you in this room, both American and French, have already begun the hard work of reshaping your community to better **grow**, better **compete**, and better **withstand**.

Given the urgency of the challenge we face as a global community, we must also provide the leadership necessary to make the connection between climate change and local land use decisions,

We must be ready to set goals and employ the tools necessary to monitor those goals,

We must be held accountable as individuals, as cities and towns, as a global community for the actions we take and not be held up by a lack of multilateral action.

Our cities and the climate cannot wait.

Working together, we can develop new approaches to building more sustainable, greener, healthier cities that will allow us to coexist on this planet for centuries to come.

Let the American leaders here today join with our French municipal sisters and provide leadership for the upcoming U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris to effectively move the world to major reduction in emissions and slowing of climate change, not just for us, but for our children and their children.

Thank you.