

Message from Task Force Co-Chairs



On September 10, 2020, during the global pandemic, an unexpectedly strong, late-summer storm dumped close to three inches of rain on the District of Columbia in under two hours. The deluge overwhelmed the historically undersized sewer system, which was not built to handle the intense impacts of climate change. Even the new deep tunnels - a huge investment by DC Water and the District to mitigate severe rainfall events – filled to capacity.

In the aftermath of the storm, we saw firsthand the impact the resulting flooding had on neighborhoods and residents. Together, the District Government and DC Water responded quickly to provide as much relief and assistance as possible. Those efforts sought to help residents cleanup their flooded homes and protect them from future storms.

While the immediate priority was helping residents recover, the September 10 storm underscored the growing risk of severe flooding due to climate change and the urgency to do something about it. The District has already experienced the very real consequences of shifting global temperatures and weather patterns – including rising water levels and the increasing frequency of what were once considered once in a lifetime storms.

Given this threat, the City Administrator recognized the need for a coordinated, comprehensive effort to identify the causes of flooding throughout the District, and an equitable interagency plan of action to address flooding and its impacts on residents. We are charged with leading this effort but flooding preparedness and prevention doesn't fall to any one single agency or utility. It is a broad mission that touches all of the agencies and organizations assembled here, and it will take the full commitment and resources of the entire Task Force to be successful. This is a tough challenge, but we look forward to working together to find lasting solutions for the District and its residents.

Tommy Wells

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