

York County Studies the Effects of Climate Change on Economic Activity

Project Summary/Overview

In order to understand the potential economic changes in Maine from climate change, this project explored four different effects: changed outputs (referring to change in what is produced in Maine); changed opportunities (reflecting that efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change will create new opportunities for economic activities in Maine); changed costs; and changed perceptions of time and risk (referring to the fundamental economic problem of how to assess the costs and benefits of different actions to mitigate climate change and to adapt to it). The authors evaluated risk estimates by presenting a case study of the projected consequences of sea level rise and coastal storm damage on the economy of the state's most vulnerable area - York County coastal communities.

Project Background

This project examined the possible consequences of sea level rise and coastal storm damage on the economies of communities in Maine most likely to be vulnerable: the coastal communities of York County. Nine towns in York County border the ocean.

Project Implementation

This project examined how the different effects that may result in economic change will impact the communities of York County, and ultimately, the state of Maine.

Project Outcomes and Conclusions

The hazards to Maine's economy from climate change are real, but are still largely unknown. A better understanding of the risks of climate change to peoples' livelihoods and property is a vital part of preparing the way for effective action. A better understanding of the risks, probabilities, and vulnerabilities of climate change on the economy in Maine is important.

(Prepared by: Charles S. Colgan and Samuel B. Merrill)

Part of the Northeast Climate Change Adaptation Project

*In 2011, the [Northeast Regional Ocean Council \(NROC\)](#) and the [Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment \(GOMC\)](#) received funding from the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's \(NOAA's\) Climate and Societal Interactions Program \(CSI\)](#) to examine innovative municipal approaches to climate change adaptation in the coastal zone of the Northeast and Bay of Fundy. The two-year project, *Stimulate Innovation and Increase the Pace of Municipal Responses to a Changing Climate in the Coastal Zone of the Northeast and Bay of Fundy*, was completed in June, 2013. The research and outreach for the project was conducted by the following partners: the [Marine Affairs Institute](#), a partnership of [Roger Williams University School of Law](#), [Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program](#), and [University of Rhode Island](#); [Blue Urchin](#); [StormSmart Coasts Network](#); and [Clean Air-Cool Planet](#).*

Read more about the Northeast Climate Change Adaptation Project on our website:
<http://necca.stormsmart.org/>