



**NORTHEAST RISK  
& RESILIENCE**  
LEADERSHIP  
FORUM  
A Risk Mitigation Leadership Forum Event



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Media Contact: Eric Cote  
[cote@disastersafetystrategies.com](mailto:cote@disastersafetystrategies.com)  
401-374-8500

## **National Leaders Collaborate on Best Practices in Resilience as Second Anniversary of Sandy Approaches**

### *Progress Noted but Experts Say More Action Needed*

Stamford, CT – With the two year anniversary of Sandy just weeks away, over 350 leading environmentalists, policy makers, scientists, and insurance industry experts gathered in Stamford, CT today for the [Northeast Risk & Resilience Leadership Forum](#) to assess the lessons learned from the second costliest storm in U.S. history and to examine best practices for mitigating and adapting to severe weather in the future.

While progress in rebuilding from Sandy's devastating impact was acknowledged, leaders cautioned that much more action is needed and tough decisions have to be made to better protect people and property in the Northeast from the severe weather that is predicted for the future.

The day-long forum tackled a number of important issues raised by Sandy through panel discussions and keynote speeches from powerful figures in government and the environmental community.

U.S. [Senator Chris Murphy](#) (D-CT) a member of Congress' Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change, addressed the delegates and said he will continue to push Congress to adopt strong and proactive environmental policies that combat climate change, curb pollution, invest in renewable energy, and promote sustainable development solutions.

"I'm thrilled that such a distinguished group of disaster resilience experts was able to assemble today in Stamford," said Murphy. "It's not a question of whether we'll see another Superstorm Sandy, but only a question of when. We need the best minds working together on these complex challenges, and I hope today's event helped move us toward that goal."

Alice C. Hill, the Senior Advisor for Preparedness and Resilience to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, charged delegates in an opening keynote address to tackle the challenges facing the nation head on.

"The impacts of climate change threaten the nation's infrastructure, public health, and economic resilience as well as the country's national and homeland security," said Hill. "We have the power to make decisions and take adaptive actions now to ensure our resilience to a changing climate."

As a member of the National Security Council Staff at the White House, Hill serves as the principal advisor on preparedness and resilience issues arising from climate change. Her duties include providing advice and counsel on implementation of the President's Climate Action Plan

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and developing policy regarding building resilient infrastructure. The former federal prosecutor and judge also works to remove barriers to ensuring resiliency, promotes creation of innovative delivery of climate change related information, fosters regional coordination of federal climate preparedness and resilience services, and leads interagency policy groups.

Hill's words to delegates were echoed by [Collin O'Mara](#), the President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, who provided a keynote luncheon address. O'Mara presented a clear picture of potential for natural infrastructure to make communities more resilient to extreme weather and other climate impacts. "Nearly two years after Superstorm Sandy, communities up and down the Atlantic seaboard remain staggeringly vulnerable to extreme storms, sea level rise, and other climate impacts. It is critical that we take steps now to restore and enhance the natural systems of our coastlines and communities so they can safeguard both us and wildlife from the growing threats."

The Northeast Risk & Resilience Leadership Forum was the tenth in a series of Risk Mitigation Leadership Forums convened by the [RenaissanceRe Risk Sciences Foundation](#). "I want to thank today's participants for contributing to such a productive discussion about the impact of Sandy on the Northeast region and what we all need to do to protect people and property from the deadly effects of natural disasters," said Stephen Weinstein, Chairman of the RenaissanceRe Risk Sciences Foundation and General Counsel of RenaissanceRe. "Our collective goal is to move the nation towards a proactive rather than reactive response to severe weather and other disasters through increased resiliency measures, improved construction practices, and a greater awareness of the inherent benefits of natural environments in protecting against the devastating effects of storms, floods and other weather related disasters. If we succeed, we will reduce both the life safety risks and economic costs of these increasing perils."

Other prominent figures taking part in the forum included Dr. Rick Knabb, Director of the [National Hurricane Center](#); Dr. Bill Read, Knabb's predecessor; Rachel Cleetus, Senior Climate Economist, Climate and Energy Program, [Union of Concerned Scientists](#); Katherine Greig, Senior Policy Advisor, Climate Change and Insurance in the New York City Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency; Brian Swett, Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space for the City of Boston; [Adam Sobel](#), Professor of Earth & Environmental Sciences, Applied Physics & Applied Mathematics, Columbia University; and [David Marra](#), head of RenaissanceRe's newly opened Connecticut office.

Panel discussions explored what made Sandy a "Super Storm", how it was different from other major hurricanes and whether Sandy was the "big one." Panels also delved into how the view of risk in the region has changed since Sandy, ways to boost resilient recovery following a major event, the appropriate role of government in disaster education, response and recovery, and the question of whether major urban centers were sufficiently prepared to deal with severe weather in the future. The role of coastal ecosystems and land use in protecting communities in the Northeast against severe weather was also addressed.

Co-sponsors of the forum included the [Center for Clean Air Policy](#) (CCAP), the [Federal Alliance for Safe Homes](#) (FLASH), the [Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety](#) (IBHS), the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#), the [University of Connecticut Sea Grant program](#), and [WeatherPredict Consulting Inc.](#)

More information about the Northeast Risk & Resilience Leadership Forum is available at [www.mitigationleadership.com](http://www.mitigationleadership.com).

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