

Dear \_\_\_\_\_[stakeholder],

As you know, severe storms have been impacting Martha's Vineyard with increasing frequency. Sea level rise - totaling more than a foot in the last century and continuing – is increasing coastal erosion and flooding. The intensity of both rain events and droughts has measurably increased. Because of your professional expertise and on-the-ground understanding of these issues, we need your help to identify threats to our communities and set priorities for action.

We hope you will join us for a pair of invitation-only workshops to be held May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 6<sup>th</sup> at the West Tisbury Public Library. Chilmark and West Tisbury have received grant funding to complete the workshop process through the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program. Towns that complete the MVP workshop process will be eligible for funding to implement projects that they've identified to build resilience against hazard vulnerability. These two workshops in May will build on the 2015 Dukes County Hazard Mitigation Plan, offering us an important opportunity to identify key hazards threatening our infrastructure, community, and environment.

The first workshop, to be held Thursday May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm, will start with dinner and a presentation, which will introduce the project and offer an overview of the current Hazard Mitigation Plan and EEA's climate change projections for our area. We will then work in small groups, using maps to identify key hazards our two towns are facing currently and in the future. We will be done by 9pm.

The second workshop will be held on Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, from 1-5 PM. Building on the maps and lists of hazards identified during the first workshop, we will draw up a list of specific actions that could be implemented to address these challenges. Then we will work to set priorities for potential grant funding, as well as the possible expenditure of local funds, staff time and volunteer initiatives.

After your participation in these 2 workshops, our town staff and consultants will document the workshop process and results, and submit a compiled report to EEA so that West Tisbury and Chilmark can receive MVP designation. The outcome will be an enhanced understanding of our two towns' vulnerability to climate-related hazards, a clear list of achievable actions we should take to build resilience, and eligibility to receive state funding to implement these actions.

This process will only be successful if it includes community members that understand the potential impacts from flooding, storm damage, wild fire and other hazards – and have the wisdom and experience to help develop common-sense solutions. Your knowledge as \_\_\_\_\_ will be of particular relevance to this effort. We hope you can join us to make this important next step possible.