Achieving Success in the Community Disaster Resilience Zones: What Do Changemakers Need to Know?

Speaker Biographies

Senator Gary Peters has represented Michigan in the US Senate since 2015, and prior to that served in the US House of Representatives. He is currently the Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and has been recognized as one of the most effective and bipartisan Senators, according to the non-partisan Center for Effective Lawmaking and the Lugar Center. Last Congress, Senator Peters authored and was the principal sponsor of 19 bills signed into law – the most enacted into law by a US Senator during a single Congress in over 40 years. One of those bills was the bipartisan Community Disaster Resilience Zones Act, which was signed into law a year ago this month and brings us all here today.

Myra Jones-Taylor leads the Urban Institute's policy impact strategy as the organization's first chief policy impact officer. She works with researchers and policy experts across Urban to help maximize the impact of their findings and evidence-based recommendations while helping tell the story of how their work changes lives and strengthens communities. Before this role, Jones-Taylor was the chief policy officer at Zero to Three, where she led the development and implementation of the organization's policy agenda, priorities, and strategies while serving as the principal spokesperson on all policy matters. She previously served as Connecticut's founding commissioner of early childhood, leading the cabinet-level state agency that serves all children from birth to age 5 and is responsible for early care and education, home visiting, and early intervention and child care licensing in the state. During her time as commissioner, the state agency was awarded $50 million in new, competitive federal grants and expanded access to high-quality preschool to 25 percent more 3- and 4-year-olds. Jones-Taylor is a class of 2022 New America national fellow and has the honor of being both an Ascend fellow and a Pahara fellow of the Aspen Institute. She writes and speaks about racial identity, systemic racism, and social inequality. You can find her writing and speaking about these issues in The Atlantic and on the podcast The Longest Shortest Time. Jones-Taylor received a joint doctorate in American studies and anthropology from Yale University.

Marccus Hendricks is an Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Planning and is the Director of the Stormwater Infrastructure Resilience and Justice (SIRJ) Lab at the University of Maryland (UMD). He also holds appointments in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health. Recently, Dr. Hendricks served in the Biden-Harris Administration as a Senior Advisor for Climate and Community Resilience in the inaugural Office of Environmental Justice at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in the Executive Office of the President. To date, he has primarily worked to understand how social processes and development patterns create hazardous human-built environments, vulnerable infrastructure, and the related risks and promising adaptation strategies related to, for example, urban stormwater management and flooding, industrial releases and explosions, and sanitary sewer overflows. Dr. Hendricks' environmental justice portfolio spans working on the ground with communities from Texas, through the Carolinas, and into Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Pennsylvania. His work has been covered by or quoted in the Associated Press, CNN, NPR, USA Today, Scientific American, Huffington Post, Baltimore Sun, and Accuweather, to name a few. While at UMD, Dr. Hendricks received two career awards from the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine and The JPB Environmental Health Fellows Program at Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. Recently, he delivered a TEDx talk titled "Citizen Participation in Rising Waters" at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. He was also selected as one of 50 emerging leaders or "Fixers" in the 2021 Grist 50, has served on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Science

Advisory Board (SAB), and is an author on the social Systems and Justice chapter of the U.S. Fifth National Climate Assessment. He holds a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Science and a Master of Public Health, both from Texas A&M University.

Andrew Rumbach is a senior fellow at the Urban Institute where he co-leads the Climate and Communities practice area in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. Rumbach is a mixed-methods researcher who studies household and community risk to natural hazards and climate change. He is especially interested in how federal, state, and local government plans and policies shape hazard mitigation, climate adaptation, and community disaster recovery. He has studied numerous federal and state-declared disaster events and has written about affordable housing and disaster vulnerability, land-use policy and environmental risk, the vulnerability of cultural and historic resources to disasters and climate extremes, and rural governance of disasters. His writing has appeared in such venues as the Journal of the American Planning Association, Housing Studies, Habitat International, and the Journal of Urban Affairs. His research has been supported by the National Science Foundation; the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; the Natural Hazards Center; the Rockefeller Foundation, and others. Rumbach earned a BA in political science from Reed College and a PhD and MRP in city and regional planning from Cornell University.

Victoria Salinas is an appointee in the Biden-Harris Administration and currently serves at DHS's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the Associate Administrator for Resilience. FEMA Resilience aims to help communities across the U.S. equitably adapt, survive, recover, and thrive in the face of natural disasters, climate change, and security threats, through programs that aim to help communities better understand their risk; transfer risk through insurance; and build the capacity to prepare, protect, respond, and recover from disasters. Previously serving as the Chief Resilience Officer and Deputy City Administrator for Oakland, California, Ms. Salinas spearheaded planning, policy, and legislative efforts to address climate, disaster, and socio-economic vulnerability. At the World Bank, the United Nations, and previously at FEMA, she worked alongside officials at all levels of government to plan recovery efforts following major disasters. She started her career at FEMA, following Hurricane Katrina, helping lead federal interagency efforts to develop new policies and programs that now guide disaster recovery in the US. Most recently, Ms. Salinas served as the Vice President for Programs and Communication at the non-profit FUSE Corps, where she focused on strengthening the capacity of local government to address community challenges. She partnered with leaders from 35 cities and counties to embed and support FUSE Executive Fellows tackling projects related to climate change, justice reform, affordable housing, and more. Ms. Salinas has a master's degree in public policy from Harvard Kennedy School and a bachelor's degree from the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

Madison Sloan is the Director of the Disaster Recovery and Fair Housing Project at Texas Appleseed. Her work focuses on ensuring equity for low-income families and communities in federal disaster recovery programs, as well as broader issues of housing choice and neighborhood equity under the Fair Housing Act and related civil rights laws. This work includes partnership with community-based organizations and providing policy and legal support for organizing groups. Madison joined Texas Appleseed in 2007 as an Equal Justice Works Katrina Legal Fellow, under a new program that placed experienced attorneys with host agencies in the Gulf Coast region. She received the 2011 Impact Award from the State Bar of Texas Poverty Law Section for her work with Texas Housers on disaster recovery following Hurricanes Dolly and Ike in 2008. That work resulted in a Conciliation Agreement resolving an administrative complaint challenging Texas' compliance with the Fair Housing Act and other federal civil rights requirements that covered $3 billion in federal disaster recovery funds. With a Texas Appleseed colleague, she was a fellow in the 2015 class of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law's Racial Justice Training Institute, a national leadership program that equips anti-poverty advocates to address the role that racism plays in

causing and perpetuating poverty. Madison started her career as a staff attorney at Legal Services of South Central Michigan, representing elderly and low-income clients in housing, public benefits, and family law cases. She received her law degree from the University of Michigan Law School and a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School at the University of Texas.

Scott Williamson is Senior Vice President and Director of Analytics, responsible for the analysis of state and federal regulatory/legislative proposals that impact the P&C industry. Additionally, Mr. Williamson has developed models to assist the RAA in its advocacy positions. He is also responsible for a number of statistical reports published by the RAA, including the Casualty and Catastrophe Loss Development Studies, Reinsurance Quarterly Reports, Reinsurance Underwriting Review, and Offshore Reinsurance in the U.S. Market. Before joining the RAA, Mr. Williamson was a financial analyst with GE Financial Assurance (now Genworth Financial), where he also held positions in corporate governance and regulatory compliance. Mr. Williamson received a BS from Virginia Commonwealth University, and an MBA from Strayer University in Washington, D.C. He is an ARe.

Sara McTarnaghan is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute and colead for the Climate and Communities practice area. Her research focuses on the intersection between climate resilience and affordable housing, as well as local and regional approaches to equitable resilience planning and disaster recovery. She examines the connections between the built and natural environments and social and economic outcomes, especially for people and communities disproportionately affected by the increasing frequency and severity of climate impacts and disasters. McTarnaghan is leading work funded by HUD on post disaster outcomes of renters and the National Academies of Sciences on planning for the health impacts of climate change in overburdened Gulf Coast communities. She recently oversaw the global outcome evaluation of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities network, which tracked changes in municipal governance and planning. Additionally, she was the urban research lead for a US Agency for International Development program that will inform the agency's urban resilience programming. McTarnaghan is skilled in spatial and qualitative research methods and program evaluation. She has extensive experience conducting interviews and focus groups in both English and Spanish. Before joining Urban, McTarnaghan researched affordable housing preservation in transit corridors in Austin and worked at the nonprofit TECHO on fundraising and program development. She earned a BA from the George Washington University and an MS in community and regional planning and an MA in Latin American studies from the University of Texas at Austin.