

February 2, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

The Governors' South Atlantic Alliance (GSAA) is circulating a request for volunteers to participate in our 2015 strategic issue development process. The states, in collaboration with their partners, have identified two "Problem Statements" regarding significant regional challenges that the GSAA is positioned to address or elevate (please see enclosure). **For each Problem Statement, an Ad-Hoc Workgroup will be formed to further develop the strategies and potential actions the GSAA can pursue at a regional scale.**

The GSAA is seeking volunteers with the interest and expertise to serve on the two Ad-Hoc Workgroups and support the development of brief (2-page) strategic issue statements for each Problem Statement. Expertise internal and external to the GSAA is welcome to participate. The initial time commitment is expected to be approximately two months and first drafts of the strategic issue statements are targeted for the end of April.

Interested parties can contact the GSAA Coordinator, Kristine Cherry (kristine.cherry@gsaalliance.org), for further details or to participate in a Workgroup. **Expressions of interest are requested by February 20th** and planning calls are expected to begin immediately.

Your engagement is critical to the success of this new strategic direction and we look forward to your insights through these workgroups.

With thanks,



Kevin Claridge, Chair
FL Department of Environmental Protection



Brad Gane
GA Department of Natural Resources



Sara Bazemore
SC Department of Health and
Environmental Control



Braxton Davis
NC Department of Environment and Natural
Resources

Enclosure: GSAA 2015 Problem Statements

The Governors' South Atlantic Alliance (GSAA) has selected two "problem statements" regarding significant regional challenges that the GSAA is positioned to address or elevate. These issues are specific, regional in nature, responsive to the "resilience" driver, and relevant to or actionable in some way by the Steering Group and/or Governors. Ad-Hoc Workgroups will now be established to further develop the strategic issues that the GSAA will address in 2015 to begin resolving these problem statements. One or two page issue statements will be developed to articulate each problem in some detail and identify the specific needs that the GSAA can address at a regional scale, such as (1) GSAA cooperative or collaborative efforts, (2) research, data, and information, or (3) changes in government policies or programs. These issues will be reviewed annually and adjusted as appropriate by the EPT.

1. **Businesses in the South Atlantic region are vulnerable to disruptions from storms like Hurricanes Sandy and Katrina.** Hurricane Sandy caused billions in economic disruption in NY and NJ alone, much of which could have been avoided by better planning for preparation and recovery. Businesses in the South Atlantic region have the opportunity to be better prepared and experience less disruption through implementation of FEMA's National Disaster Recovery Framework. *The GSAA can help by advocating for the resources needed to implement the NDRF in our region.*
2. **The siting of future offshore energy facilities in the South Atlantic region remains somewhat unpredictable due to the potential for conflicts with existing ocean activities and sensitive resource areas.** This could ultimately lead to delays in permitting or extensive litigation. In order to support prudent, efficient decision-making for onshore and offshore energy (alternative and traditional) exploration and production facilities, investments are needed both in policy analysis and data collection. *By joining with ocean industry leaders in the region, the GSAA can help synthesize existing data, fill data gaps, identify potential use conflicts with military (using the DoD provided offshore wind and oil/gas related military mission footprints) and other ocean operations, improve understanding and mapping of sensitive resources areas, and streamline permitting.* Investing in collecting and organizing the data and information (bathymetry, geographic features, existing/future uses, physical and ecological processes, and potential conflicts and impacts) necessary to address questions regarding suitability and ecological impacts will improve development opportunities as well as limit negative impacts.