Dear Friends,

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all who are gathered for the Virginia Coastal Policy Center's 5th Annual Conference.

This event, "Defending our Coasts: Ensuring Military Readiness and Economic Viability as Waters Rise," provides an opportunity to engage in important discussions on issues affecting Virginia’s coastal resources and communities. The challenge of coastal resilience and ensuring the viability of our Nation’s military infrastructure is uniquely important here in the Commonwealth. Our coastal zone has been identified as the second most vulnerable to sea level rise in all the Nation. This poses direct threats to the Hampton Roads region, which is the proud home to the largest naval base in the world, the Navy’s oldest shipyard, and an entire network of military personnel, shipbuilders, and ship repair workers who provide an incredible service to our Nation. A recent report by the Government Accountability Office examining our Nation’s shipyards emphasized that our region faces unique environmental challenges, with the Navy identifying serious flooding concerns.

In anticipation of these worsening trends, we must ensure that we are investing in resilient infrastructure in threatened communities. Virginia ranks above all other states in terms of industrial base support for our military. This distinction bears with it the responsibility that we deliver leadership on the issues of coastal resilience and the protection of our vital defense infrastructure.

I wish you the very best for a successful and informative event.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Warner
MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator