


9-11-2014

## McAuliffe Launches Climate Change Commission

Bill Sizemore

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/odurc\\_news](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/odurc_news)

 Part of the [Environmental Sciences Commons](#), [Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Sizemore, Bill, "McAuliffe Launches Climate Change Commission" (2014). *News Items*. 6.  
[https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/odurc\\_news/6](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/odurc_news/6)

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the ODU Resilience Collaborative at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Items by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@odu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@odu.edu).

BREAKING NEWS

CNN: McAuliffe under investigation by FBI and federal prosecutors

# ENVIRONMENT

Home / News / Local News / Environment

[http://pilotonline.com/news/local/environment/mcauliffe-launches-climate-change-commission/article\\_4501fd5b-bc37-5555-8cfa-21c8e7598e1b.html](http://pilotonline.com/news/local/environment/mcauliffe-launches-climate-change-commission/article_4501fd5b-bc37-5555-8cfa-21c8e7598e1b.html)

## McAuliffe launches climate change commission

Bill Sizemore  
Sep 11, 2014



The'N. Pham | The Virginian-Pilot

A motorist waits for help inside of her vehicle at the intersection of Tidewater Drive and Virginia Beach Boulevard.

## RICHMOND

Recurrent flooding in Hampton Roads – the latest example of which occurred just this week – took center stage as Gov. Terry McAuliffe launched an advisory commission on climate change Wednesday.

It's a reconstituted version of a similar commission established by former Gov. Tim Kaine, now a U.S. senator, in 2007. That group produced a report in 2008 containing dozens of recommendations for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, which most scientists blame for alarming rises in global temperatures and sea levels.

Many of the panel's recommendations went unheeded amid a politically charged debate over whether global warming is a real phenomenon and whether it's human-caused. Now that he's in charge, it's time to stop debating and start acting, McAuliffe told his commission at its first meeting.

"I never had a question about the issue of climate change," he said. "It is real. It is happening, and we have to face it.

"It's a scientific fact. The effects on Virginia, you can see them each and every day. ... If we let it go unchecked and pretend it's not happening, we are going to pay a dramatic price, and, most importantly, our children are going to pay that price."

The effects of climate change are a critical stumbling block to economic development, the governor said.

"You cannot bring a new business in if your roads close every time it rains," he said. As Exhibit A, he pointed to Norfolk: "Beginning Monday evening and all day yesterday, they had about 8 inches of rain in 36 hours. Many of the roads are closed."

He recalled a visit to Norfolk on a rainy day a few months ago when he rode with Mayor Paul Fraim from Nauticus, the downtown maritime museum, to Doumar's, the iconic drive-in diner a short distance away.

"It took us probably 30 minutes to go what normally would take eight minutes because of all the road closures," he said. "I said, 'Mayor, what's the deal here?' He said, 'This happens every time it rains here.' "

Two hours before the governor's commission met, flooding in Hampton Roads was also featured at a meeting of a legislative subcommittee charged with studying recurrent flooding.

That panel, led by Del. Chris Stolle, R-Virginia Beach, viewed a chart produced by three scientists at Old Dominion University illustrating the exponential increase in flooding in Norfolk's Hague neighborhood since the 1930s.

McAuliffe said he wants the commission to report back to him within a year with some "big ideas" to combat climate change that can be implemented before the end of his four-year term.

"I am not afraid to take on a tough issue," he said.

The governor's 35-member commission is a broad group. It includes utility executives, environmentalists, renewable-energy entrepreneurs, scientists and elected officials.

Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, a Democrat like McAuliffe, served on the Kaine commission and is a member of the new group as well. He said he is optimistic that this one will get more traction than its predecessor did.

"Back in '07 and '08, we had good discussions. We had good science," Northam said. "But there was a tremendous amount of denial – from not only folks on the commission, but in the public, in society.

"Now, there is much more acceptance. There is acceptance from the public, there is acceptance from the business community, there is acceptance from the military.

"With acceptance comes opportunity."

*Bill Sizemore, 757-618-8855, [bill.sizemore@pilotonline.com](mailto:bill.sizemore@pilotonline.com)*