



April 7, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is intended for various, but related audiences. These include the State Historic Preservation Offices of the Middle Atlantic states; professional archaeological organizations such as the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) and the Society for Historical Archaeology; and, other relevant local, state, and federal governments and agencies that share concerns for cultural resources increasingly affected by sea level rise.

This letter comes with the full support of the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Society (MAAC; <http://www.maacmidatlanticarchaeology.org>), its executive board, and its membership as testified by a voice vote at its recent annual meeting in Ocean City, Maryland.

By way of background, the recently formed organization, the Chesapeake Bay Archaeological Consortium (CBAC) had come into place as prehistoric and historical archaeologists concerned over the loss of archaeological shoreline sites, as affected by climate change, higher levels of seasonal flooding, and storm surge, realized that a more comprehensive regional approach to this issue was warranted. At the aforementioned Ocean City conference, CBAC requested that MAAC put together a committee to consider and promote regional responses to this serious issue. MAAC's officers and members readily agreed and the "Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Committee" was formed, chaired by Dr. Michael B. Barber, the state archaeologist for Virginia.

In this regard, MAAC and this Committee formally offer this statement of support for a regional approach to the study of sea level rise and its impact on archaeological resources. The statement is here conveyed to the SAA's Committee on Climate Change Strategies and Archaeological Resources.

We hereby express our concern for the accelerating loss of heritage resources along the Atlantic coast, within the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays, and along the tidal tributaries of those bodies of water affected by sea level rise.

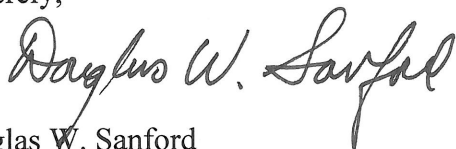
We further offer this statement as one of high priority for archaeologists, relevant regulatory agencies, and local, state, and federal governments. Hence, archaeologists working in these regions should focus on documenting the full range of cultural resources and should assist in determining possible conservation measures. Governments and agencies are encouraged to prioritize funding and other resources for the documentation and mitigation of affected cultural resources.

We further offer this statement so as to encourage a regional, cooperative approach. Sea level rise represents a problem that requires collaborative, interstate efforts from the archaeological community, citizens, and the aforementioned governments and agencies.

As a regional organization, MAAC promotes partnerships across member states to consider a wide range of archaeological issues. While that of sea level rise represents a more recent problem, it corresponds to American archaeology's long-standing goal of understanding the complex relations between human societies and the environment, including those of short and long-term climate change. In this case the concerns go beyond those of research topics and theoretical constructs. Beyond the damage to or complete loss of valuable archaeological sites, increasing sea levels threaten coastal environments and coastal communities and economies, many of which have critical linkages to cultural resources and heritage tourism that inform these communities' quality of life.

MAAC and its Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Committee look forward to working with other organizations and agencies to address sea level rise. We already have had conference symposia on the topic and would be glad to share that information with others.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Douglas W. Sanford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Douglas" and last name "Sanford" clearly legible.

Douglas W. Sanford

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