



City of Cambridge

795 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02139

Ph. 617-349-4300 617-349-4242 TTY

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

News Release

Contact: Ini Tomeu, Public Information Officer

Ph. 617-349-4339/itomeu@cambridgema.gov

For Immediate Release:

June 17, 2013

Cambridge Mayor Henrietta Davis Joins 45 Mayors and County Leaders Nationwide in Pledge to Create More Resilient Cities

National campaign highlights the City of Cambridge's leadership and commitment in response to growing extreme weather and energy challenges.

City of Cambridge, MA JUNE 17, 2013 – Mayor Henrietta Davis has joined 45 other mayors and county officials from around the country who have committed to creating more resilient cities, towns and counties in response to our nation's growing extreme weather and energy challenges. As an Inaugural Signatory of the Resilient Communities for America campaign, Mayor Davis is among the first local elected officials in the nation to showcase her leadership on these key issues testing America's communities.

The national campaign, which launched today, recognizes that local governments like Cambridge are on the front lines of responding to increasing disasters and disruptions fueled by a changing climate. An unprecedented increase in heat waves, droughts, floods, severe storms and wildfires have devastated communities nationwide over the past two years and cost America \$188 billion in damages. Communities are also put at risk by unreliable and costly energy, thanks to volatile global prices and aging infrastructure taxed by extreme weather.

"We cannot ignore the challenges we will face in Cambridge and in so many other regions across the country," said Mayor Davis. "Because climate change is a global challenge that will significantly affect our community locally, we must take action here in Cambridge to deal with the changing climate and extreme weather that we have already begun to see taking shape. I am committed to helping Cambridge become more resilient and prepared—to keep our community safe and strong, and keep our economy competitive."

The Resilient Communities for America campaign (www.resilientamerica.org) seeks to champion the work of Mayor Davis and other local elected officials and local governments at the forefront of the emerging national movement to build resilience—and to inspire hundreds more to follow their lead. Local governments can take a wide range of actions to prepare and protect community members, businesses, infrastructure and natural resources, and allow communities to bounce back faster from disruptions and disasters. Every \$1 spent on disaster risk reduction can save \$4 in recovery and emergency response costs—making resilience efforts a sound investment for our community.

The City of Cambridge has already begun to face significant challenges from a change in weather patterns. In 2010, a storm dropped four inches of rain on Cambridge streets in just one hour – placing a major burden on aging infrastructure and leading to flooded homes and businesses. This event in

particular caused negative environmental, economic and social impacts on the community. In the future, it is predicted that Cambridge will see an increase in average precipitation, which will lead to more local flooding. Higher temperatures and longer-lasting heat waves, more intense hurricanes, with resulting increases in wind speeds, precipitation and storm surges are also anticipated. Sea Level Rise is also expected at an additional 1-2 feet by 2050, and 3-6 feet by 2100, significantly increasing the risk of storm surge flooding in Cambridge.

In response to these challenges, the City of Cambridge has already taken a range of cost-effective actions that increase resilience to climate change:

- In 2012, the City launched a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment to learn how climate change will affect homes, businesses, institutions and people in Cambridge. Over 40 presentations will be given throughout the community to engage residents and businesses in talking about our vulnerabilities as a community.
- In 2014, the City will turn the information gathered through the Vulnerability Assessment into a Climate Change Preparedness Plan, relying heavily on community input to design an actionable plan.
- Also in 2013, the City signed the Compact for a Sustainable Community, in partnership with Harvard University and MIT and multiple large businesses. This compact creates a framework for collaborating on both climate change mitigation and resiliency planning.
- Through the CitySmart and Cambridge Energy Alliance programs, Cambridge is engaging closely with residents and businesses to educate and push for action towards switching modes of transportation from single occupancy vehicles to sustainable modes, taking energy efficiency measures in the home and business, and installing renewable energy sources on local buildings.

In signing the Resilient Communities for America Agreement, Mayor Davis joins 45 other leading mayors and county leaders from across the country, including Mayor Vincent Gray of Washington DC, Mayor Kevin Johnson of Sacramento, CA; Mayor John Cook of El Paso, TX; Mayor Dawn Zimmer of Hoboken, NJ, and Mayor Kristin Jacobs of Broward County, FL.

The campaign Agreement letter they signed lays out three commitments for local elected officials:

- To urge state and federal leaders to support local resilience initiatives and to take meaningful steps to build resilience and security throughout the nation.
- To build community resilience through their own self-defined local actions and goals (emphasizing actions that address climate change, energy security, infrastructure renewal and economic recovery)
- To share their solutions and success stories with other local governments to help accelerate their progress on resilience.

The Resilient Communities for America campaign is being coordinated by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability USA, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Green Building Council and the World Wildlife Fund. Learn more at www.resilientamerica.org.

-###-

