

Good morning, and welcome to The New School! My name is Michelle DePass, and I am the Director of the university-wide Tishman Environment and Design Center at The New School, and Dean of the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy.

I want to start off by thanking you all for joining us today for *On The Edge: Confronting the Threat of Sea Level Rise* with the Regional Planning Association. I'd like to extend a special thank you to RPA for bringing this event to The New School and thank you to the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy for their dedicated efforts to make this conference possible.

RPA's dedication to improving the sustainability and quality of life in the entire region through research and planning creates a natural partnership with the Tishman Environment and Design Center. The Tishman Center's mission is to foster design, policy, and social justice approaches to environmental issues to advance just and sustainable outcomes in collaboration with communities. As part of our collaborative efforts with community partners, the Tishman Center offers technical support to community-based organizations, advocates and policy-makers to co-produce and promote cutting-edge research. We strive to create

interdisciplinary opportunities for both the New School community and the wider external community to create innovative solutions for some of society's biggest challenges, among them, climate change and sea level rise.

Four years ago, Hurricane Sandy served as a brutal awakening to the significant risks of flooding and other damage we face from catastrophic storms here in New York City and across the region. While many of our communities are taking steps to become more resilient to the impacts of storm surge, far fewer are taking the necessary steps to prepare for sea level rise. Today, we are proud to have you all here to launch a series of conversations about the urgent need for communities to begin planning today for the long term impact of sea level rise.

The Mission of The New School aims to prepare students to understand, contribute to, and succeed in a rapidly changing society, and thus make the world a better and more just place. At the Tishman Center, we strive to create a more just and sustainable world through our partnerships with scholars, practitioners, and organizations and we work to activate our students as citizens of the world. I look forward to today's panels and

conversations in the hopes that we can all keep similar aims in mind: to prepare ourselves and our communities to understand the challenges ahead, to contribute to just solutions in the face of warming temperatures and rising seas, and to adapt to the changes ahead in a way that will allow everyone in the region to thrive.

Once again, on behalf of the Tishman Center and The New School, I thank you all for joining us today, and I look forward to learning from each other.