**Table # 7**

**Panel 2, Political, Psychological, Public Health and Ethical Response to SLR**

**Note taker: Jennifer Cunningham**

**Moderator: Tal Ezer**

***Question 1****: Politically, how can the U.S. and the EU move beyond gridlock in addressing sea level rise?*

***Answer/Notes:***

In the US – stop arguing about why it is happening

Raise the sea level rise issue in terms of the costs

The energy companies have a lot of resources, have an interest in politicizing climate issues, confusing the public so they don’t trust the information from scientists

The pieces have to be connected, in the way it was done in the study of sea level rise on the Naval Station – in other words need to show what the impact would be on oil rigs, for example

The emphasis needs to be on how do we plan for what’s coming, rather than on stopping or reversing climate change, or discussing what caused it

***Question 2:*** *In what ways can the discussion move beyond politics* *in order to address environmental, social, spatial, and economic risks?*

***Answer/Notes:***

Term limits? The main objective of the politician is to get through the next election – less incentive to reach long-term solutions

Impossible to de-politicize the issue

Local governments are moving past politics, embracing this as a real threat – because they are the ones who have to deal with the issue – but they don’t have the resources, local entities can’t afford to address the issue on their own – need enabling legislation from the state – state needs to come out and say this is what they believe, commit to providing resources, grant funding, give localities the ability to address the issue

In some cases special interests (ex. real estate developers) might impede progress, use money to pressure for legislation that delays efforts to address the issue

***Question 3:*** *What role should citizens’ perceptions of risk play in the conversation about sea level rise, its impacts and in adapting to it and how can we broaden their understanding of the issues?*

***Answer/Notes:***

If the state provides support to local governments, that can influence citizen’s perception of risk

Maybe a bottom-up approach is best; community groups working with media outlets to provide accurate information

In the Hampton Roads area there is a lot of awareness in the local community

We need more fear – if citizens believe their house could be regularly flooded, and that there will be economic loss, that will drive discussion with the local politicians – public works, public utilities people see this is a problem – maybe need to spread fear

But fear can also discourage investment

The insurance companies will be playing a key role – citizens complaining about flood insurance increases – govt was going to stop subsidizing but now “kicking the can down the road” and will continue subsidizing

***General Question:*** *Given what you've learned during this panel, what types of collaborative research and action might be most useful in affecting adaptive policy?*

***Answer/Notes:***

Collaborative research: pull together and publicize public health impact; also risk assessment critical - need to figure out what can be saved, what can’t.

*Consensus Points:*

Emphasis needs to be on planning for the impact of sea level rise rather than on what caused climate change or on how to reverse it

City level, bottom up approach necessary

Economic, social and environmental impact important

Need to get the politics out of the discussion

*Takeaways/Action Items:*

A collaborative approach is necessary – need to pull together risk assessment, public health issues, economic, social, and environmental impact and communicate to the public

*Points of dissent:*

We need more fear; if citizens believe their house could be regularly flooded, and that there will be economic loss, that will drive discussion with the local politicians

Too much fear will discourage investment