

Rising Seas And The US

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Natural disasters like Hurricane Irma and Harvey are part of the US [Hurricane season](#), and the rising sea is a constant reminder that such natural disasters will be a common phenomenon in the future. As the temperature rises, the risks of floods and hurricanes increase around the globe, costing the nation's lives and resources and leaving many people homeless.

For instance, in the US, various hurricanes in 2017 caused billions of dollars and engaged regional and local governments in policy-making to change their policies regarding climate change. The rise in temperature is due to increased levels of carbon emissions that contribute to the rise in temperature, which ultimately leads to the melting of ice, raising the sea levels. However, the federal government does not consider carbon consumption a cause of rising sea levels, ignoring the alarming situation. Trump administration has not paid much attention to the risks that climate change poses to the US (Swope). Although there is uncertainty regarding the immediate risks from rising sea levels, it must not be ignored because of the uncertainty, as evidence has shown that the glaciers are melting at greater levels with an increase in temperature. Moreover, it takes hundreds of lives every year with an increased cost of rehabilitation. Therefore, the government must restrict the use of fuels and carbon emissions to mitigate the risks.

Rising sea levels are due to the greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide that are released into the atmosphere partly because of human activities such as burning fossil fuels. The temperature of the earth increases when the gases are released, causing thermal expansion, which leads to an increase in the temperature of the earth. The increased temperature of the earth then melts the ice sheets, adding to the water volume and raising the water levels. According to research, the mean sea level has risen 7 to 8 inches since 1990, and 3 inches out of the 7-8 have risen since 1993. Therefore, it is one of the immediate concerns of scientists as the elevated sea levels are a threat to the millions of people living in the coastal areas around the US. These people are at risk of floods, Hurricanes, and high tides, especially in cities such as New York City, Boston, and Florida. The estimate states around 2 million homes in different states of the US would be underwater by 2100 if the water level rises to 6 feet, and Florida and New Jersey would be at high risk. Moreover, the floods and Hurricanes costs the US billions of dollars in rehabilitation and reliefs; in 2017 alone, the US spent \$265 billion due to the hurricanes and floods (Swope).

However, the current federal government does not consider rising sea levels a concern. Although Obama signed an executive order in 2015 making it compulsory for federal agencies to take into account climate change while building infrastructure, Trump has undone it. Trump administration does not believe in climate change, due to which it has rolled back the Obama policies regarding climate change and rising sea levels. Trump has undone the limitations that Obama had put on the coal-fired power plants, opening federal lands for fossil fuel production. Trump withdrew from the

Paris Agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions (Swope; Park).

Regardless, the local and regional governments are preparing to reduce the risks from rising sea levels. For example, Florida has formed the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, including Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach, to limit greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the effects of climate change. One of the top issues this compact is handling is the rise of sea levels (Swope). It also tries to gain the support of politicians so that they can influence policymaking in the long run. Similarly, in Massachusetts, the local government has signed two executive orders to create a climate change strategy, to identify the vulnerabilities, and to address the vulnerabilities. Similar strategies have been incorporated into California's government plans. The local government appears to understand the necessity of policy change in order to respond to the climate change and related problems but then why the Trump Administration is unable to respond to the problem accordingly (Swope).

There might be many reasons for the Trump administration to ignore the warnings of climate change. One reason could be that the sea level has risen since the beginning, and it is not a new phenomenon to feel alarmed. The opponents of climate change do not recognize human activities as a problem for rising sea levels because the evidence shows that sea levels have risen throughout history. Therefore, it is a false alarm. However, scientists and environmentalists have not denied the fact that sea levels have risen since the beginning, but they argue human activities have increased the intensity of the rise in the sea levels. The sea levels have risen greatly since 1993, escalating the risks of floods and hurricanes (Swope; Park).

The second reason to ignore the alarms of the rise in sea levels is that it restricts burning fuels and carbon emissions. As most of the production around the world contributes to carbon emissions and burns natural fuels, as they are easily accessible, it is harmful to capitalism to restrict carbon emissions as well as the use of fuel. Restricting carbon emissions affects the production of goods, which ultimately influences businesses negatively. Moreover, the companies focus on selling their goods more than the environment, which is why it is difficult for businesspeople like President Trump and his allies to opt for environmentally friendly policies.

Additionally, climate change-friendly policies restrict coastal development (Urry). The opponents of climate change push for coastal development to accommodate more people. However, a well-thought-out environmental policy would not allow coastal development with the current rise in sea level. As the sea levels rise, the people living in the coastal region are at risk of being homeless anytime due to hurricanes and floods; current developmental policies do not account for the risks from the rise in water levels and climate change. In addition, it costs billions of dollars to build protective walls and barriers to minimize the risks in such areas. Consequently, the environment-friendly policies cost the business people billions, which is why they are reluctant to support policies related to climate change, focusing on rising sea levels.

Nonetheless, the rise in sea levels has several negative consequences for the countries. Firstly, it

costs billions of money to rehabilitate and build the people who become homeless due to floods or hurricanes (Urry). The tides and water can destroy buildings and damage property and lands. One such devastation was seen in the Netherlands in 1953, where 1836 people died, and hundreds of buildings, properties, and farmlands were destroyed. The massive floods changed the policies in the country, and the politicians focused on the prevention of damage through various policies ("The Netherlands Remembers the Devastating Floods of 1953"). The United States must not wait for such a disaster, although it faces hurricanes and floods every year to respond to the preventive policies. Secondly, it raises the number of immigrants and homelessness, which requires the government's immediate attention, costing human resources and material resources to the country. Most importantly, recognizing climate change and rising sea levels as a problem would help the United States prepare for disasters and save lives. Thousands of people have died due to floods and Hurricanes in the United States and around the world (Kimmelman and Haner). The examples of Hurricane Katrina, Erma, and other deadly disasters that killed thousands of people should be considered.

Hence, the government of the United States must take some steps to prevent the disaster or the causalities and damages from the disaster as the Netherlands is doing. For the Netherlands, a country that is surrounded by water, the problem of rising sea levels is tangible. The Netherlands cannot ignore the problem and tries to find solutions "to give the river more places to flow" (Kimmelman and Haner). They have come up with underwater water reserves that store the water in case of an emergency. The efforts by the Netherlands show the urgency of dealing with the issue of rising water levels, and it is a way the US must follow because many of the cities in coastal areas might face the consequences if the US government ignores the rising levels of the sea.

To conclude, the US federal government and local government can work together to minimize the risks by restricting the development of projects along the coastal areas and making them accountable for the rising sea levels (Swope). They can also make policies that focus on reducing carbon emissions and fuels, making corporations and small companies accountable for their carbon footprint. It is necessary because the rising sea levels are serious threats to human lives and property. They damage buildings and infrastructure, which cost billions of dollars to the US. Therefore, the people must be united to pressure the government to make policies that are accountable for the issues of rising sea levels.

Works Cited

Kimmelman, Michael, and Josh Haner. "In the Waterlogged Netherlands, Climate Change Is Considered Neither a Hypothetical nor a Drag on the Economy." *New York Times*, 15 June 2017.

Park, Jonathan T. "Climate Change and Capitalism." Consilience, no. 14, 2015, pp. 189–206.

The article discusses that capitalism is the problem in climate change as companies focus on consumption, and production and consumption are enhanced due to advertisements to gain benefits for businesses. It is a relevant article as it highlights the restraining factors in policy-making to address climate change. The article highlights the debate that corporations and business people do not want to have environment-friendly policies, as it will negatively affect their companies.

Swope, Christopher. "Rising Seas: Are the Cities Prepared for Growing Threat?" CQ Researcher, vol. 28, no. 7, Feb. 2018.

Christopher Swope's article discusses [global climate change](#), focusing on the United States. The article discusses the problems, policies, and benefits of climate change. It examines the current policies as well as the earlier policies in the US regarding climate change. It is relevant as it discusses the sea rising in detail.

"The Netherlands Remembers the Devastating Floods of 1953." DutchNews.Nl, 1 Feb. 2018.

The article from Dutch Newspaper is essential for the paper because it comes from the references of the CQ research paper and provides evidence for the causalities caused by floods. It is relevant because it helped as evidence from other places where rising water was a problem, validating the claims from the US to push for new policymaking.

Urry, John. "Climate Change and Society." Why the Social Sciences Matter, 2015, pp. 45–59.

The article defines climate change and its impacts on society, drawing on global warming. It identifies the problem with the science of climate change and discusses the politics of climate change. It highlights the problems and debates. It is relevant to the topic as the assignment is also about climate change and its impact in the form of rising sea levels.