

# Letter: Sea-level rise may be underestimated

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Thank you for Ariel Wittenberg's article about the complexity involved in combatting sea-level rise, which emphasized that current government policies (flood insurance, rebuilding beaches, seawalls) "allow residents to underestimate the consequences" of living in coastal regions in the age of climate change.

However, I have one quibble with the article. It mentions sea-level rises of "2 to 5 inches by 2020, an increase of 7 to 12 inches by 2050 and an increase of up to 23 inches by 2080." This information relies on conservative projections that give false hope.

Various scientists have pointed out these projections underestimate the problem, warning about 3- to 6-foot sea-level rises by 2100. However, Dr. James Hansen (NASA, retired), the most authoritative climate scientist in the world, says that if emissions continue on their current course, we may experience 15-foot sea-level rises by 2100.

Since sea walls, truck loads of sand, new building codes and flood insurance won't protect against such high seas, it is imperative that Congress enact legislation to reduce emissions. EPA regulations, new vehicle efficiency standards, and presidential vetoes of Keystone XL, natural gas exportation and coal exportation help, but they are not enough.

Ending fossil fuel tax subsidies and enacting a national revenue-neutral carbon tax would spur development of renewable energy and reduce worldwide emissions, thus protecting against the worst projections for sea level rise.

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