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The Rising Sea

THE

Orrin H. Pilkey *and* Rob Young



Synopsis

On Shishmaref Island in Alaska, homes are being washed into the sea. In the South Pacific, small island nations face annihilation by encroaching waters. In coastal Louisiana, an area the size of a football field disappears every day. For these communities, sea level rise isn't a distant, abstract fear: it's happening now and it's threatening their way of life. In *The Rising Sea*, Orrin H. Pilkey and Rob Young warn that many other coastal areas may be close behind. Prominent scientists predict that the oceans may rise by as much as seven feet in the next hundred years. That means coastal cities will be forced to construct dikes and seawalls, or to move buildings, roads, pipelines, and railroads to avert inundation and destruction. The question is no longer whether climate change is causing the oceans to swell, but by how much and how quickly. Pilkey and Young deftly guide listeners through the science, explaining the facts and debunking the claims of industry-sponsored "skeptics." They also explore the consequences for fish, wildlife, and people. While rising seas are now inevitable, we are far from helpless. By making hard choices - including uprooting citizens, changing where and how we build, and developing a coordinated national response - we can save property, and ultimately lives. With unassailable research and practical insights, *The Rising Sea* is a critical first step in understanding the threat and keeping our heads above water.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book should be required reading of every mayor and town planner for any US city or town within 50 miles of the sea. Even if the homes and businesses under their jurisdiction are not in the

direct path of the next storm surge, officials should be prepared to receive those wise enough to retreat beforehand or as first responders to those desperately seeking refuge at the last minute. As an example, in Chapter 3, the stark news is that the survival of both Miami and New Orleans beyond the twenty-first century is in serious doubt. However, whereas the latter is making attempts to prepare, at least for the next storm if not the longer-range future, Florida officials still have their head in the sand, sand that is rapidly being swept away with every high tide. Of course, these are not the only cities and towns with a dismal future, just the most obviously in trouble. Chapter 6 describes the unintended side effects of the 1968 National Flood Insurance Program, designed to help flood victims of otherwise uninsurable homes. Unfortunately, this and other governmental programs have encouraged dangerous and environmentally damaging shoreline development. Frequently, storm recovery is essentially a vast urban renewal project, at tax payers expense. We could learn lessons from the past, especially the history of the Holderness Coast of Yorkshire, England [Chapter 11, 'Ghosts of the Past, Promise of the Future']. During the last two thousand years, 28 towns and villages have been inundated by eroding shoreline. The future destruction of an additional 20 towns will happen much more rapidly, during the next 50-100 years. Let the Holderness experience be our guide to the inevitable.

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