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Projected Sea-Level Rise Could Land Coastal Los Angeles Underwater

January 8, 2014



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redOrbit Staff & Wire Reports – Your Universe Online

Sea-level changes projected to occur around [Los Angeles](#) could increase the flood risk for the coastal city's roads, wastewater systems and low-altitude communities, University of Southern California (USC) researchers claim in a new report.

Current forecasts predict that Los Angeles, the most populous city in the state of California, could experience a [sea-level](#) increase of up to two feet by the year 2050, the study authors said in a statement.

"Tides, wave-driven run-up, and [storm surge](#) play critical roles in coastal flooding in Southern California, especially when big wave storms occur at or near peak high tides," the report warned. "Sea level rise will potentially exacerbate the damage from these events."

However, in an attempt to offset the possible harm caused by that increase, the USC researchers have partnered with city officials to gauge the potential impact of rising tides on LA's infrastructure and on surrounding communities.

While the university said in a statement that the results of the study were "a mixed bag," they noted that the most "at-risk assets" could be "protected by proactive planning and early identification of adaptation measures."

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“Some low-lying areas within the City’s jurisdiction, such as Venice Beach and some areas of Wilmington and San Pedro, are already vulnerable to flooding,” added lead author [Phyllis Grifman](#), an associate director of the USC Sea Grant Program.

“Identifying where flooding is already observed during periods of storms and high tides, and analyzing other areas where flooding is projected are key elements in beginning effective planning for the future,” she added.

The report also found that the sea-level increase is likely to highly impact the city’s wastewater management, storm water management and potable water systems, but that the port and energy infrastructure would likely not be affected because of a replacement schedule that will allow for timely infrastructure changes.

Furthermore, Grifman and her colleagues found that the anticipated flooding and ensuing erosion damage could hamper emergency services, and that museums, historical buildings and other culturally-relevant structures might become damaged as a result of the [global warming](#)-caused rise in sea level.

“Residents of low-lying communities, such as San Pedro and Wilmington, as well as those with older buildings and high numbers of renters, such as Venice, would be most affected by flooding,” the university said. “In particular, the Abbot Kinney corridor and the fragile Ballona wetlands are at risk.”

However, if the region’s beaches can be properly maintained, they could provide a shield protecting the city from the higher waters, the report said. Those beaches are said to have accounted for over \$16.5 million in revenue for the city in 2012, attracting more than 41 million tourists to the Los Angeles area during that time span.

Source: redOrbit Staff & Wire Reports - Your Universe Online

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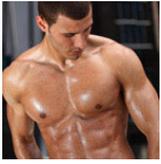
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