

Sea Level Rise: A Slow Tsunami on America's Shores

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Keith C. Pilkey

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A rising sea level is an inevitability, write Orrin Pilkey and Keith Pilkey in *Sea Level Rise*, whose research concentrates on the American shoreline. Factual prose avoids sensationalism around the causes and impact of climate change, favoring sobering reportage to impart a sense of impending environmental doom.

The text surveys areas at risk in the United States, with particular attention given to coastal communities. It covers both what has and hasn't been done to face the threat of rising sea levels, and warns to expect an increase of three feet or more by 2100. It is a broad education that extends to "climate refugees," individuals who relocate because their homes are flooded, and "climate gentrification," when housing prices increase on land at higher elevations, forcing lower income people out of their communities.

Perhaps most alarming is the book's assessment of at-risk cities, with specific concentration on communities from Seattle and Houston to Miami and Boston. Each is considered in terms of the destructive implications of sea level rise, along with what preparatory steps have been taken to date. "In general," the Pilkeys write, "it can be said that governments of American cities are not taking sea level rise seriously enough."

The book's final chapter, "What You Can Do About Sea Level Rise," is cautionary, especially for those who are thinking of moving to the coast or who already live in coastal areas. A novel section forwards "super-cautious advice to our family members" who may reside in high-risk coastal locations.

Sea Level Rise is written in direct, nontechnical language that's absent of dramatic innuendo and is full of information and documentation regarding the anticipated effects of a rising sea level. Ignoring its message could have severe consequences.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (September / October 2019)

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