



REPORT EMBARGOED
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GLOBAL WARMING INCREASES FLOOD RISK AT HUNDREDS OF COASTAL ENERGY FACILITIES NATIONWIDE

Climate Central's Dr. Ben Strauss to Testify at Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Thursday, April 19th

(April 18 – WASHINGTON, D.C.) By the year 2030, storm-driven floods amplified by sea level rise - reaching 4 ft above the high tide line - will occur twice as often as today, according to Dr. Ben Strauss, Chief Operating Officer and head of the program on Sea Level Rise at Climate Central, Inc., a nonprofit, science and journalism organization based in Princeton, N.J. Nearly 300 U.S. energy facilities along the coasts of the lower 48 states, including refineries, nuclear and conventional power plants, and gas pipelines, sit below that line, as reported in a [new Climate Central analysis](#) and summarized in testimony presented to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today.

These projections are based on peer-reviewed research conducted by Dr. Strauss and several colleagues and published in [Environmental Research Letters](#). This research also forms the basis for the [Surging Seas website](#), which includes an interactive map that allows visitors to map out the local flood risk based on zip code or city name. "The key problem," Strauss said in prepared testimony, "is that rising seas raise the launch pad for coastal storm surges, and tilt the odds toward disaster. Just a few extra inches could mean the difference to flood a family's basement – or New York City's subway system, disabling it for months. You might think of it this way: raising the floor of a basketball court would mean a lot more dunks."

According to the latest research, sea level has already risen 8 inches, on average, since 1880; by the end of this century, scientists expect between 20 and 80 additional inches, thanks to heat trapped by human-generated greenhouse gases, and the resultant disintegration of ice sheets in Greenland and, to a lesser extent, in Antarctica. As a result, the risk of flooding will continue to increase. The energy facilities with a doubled risk of floods by 2030, for example, lie within 4 feet of the projected high-tide line by that date. But facilities at higher elevations will become endangered later in the century.

"The risks from sea level rise are imminent and serious," Strauss said. "This is not a distant problem only of concern for our children. Escalating floods from sea level rise will affect millions of Americans, and threaten countless billions of dollars of damage to buildings and infrastructure."

Headquartered in Princeton, New Jersey, Climate Central (climatecentral.org) is a non-profit research and journalism organization providing authoritative and up-to-date information to help the public and policymakers make sound decisions about climate and energy.

