

The Miami Herald

Miami-Dade must be proactive in fighting sea-level rise

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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It has been a little over a year since Rolling Stone Magazine's fictional account of Miami's future underwater because of our lackadaisical approach toward climate change. The article branded Miami as "Ground Zero for Sea Level Rise".

As a result, Miami-Dade County Commission Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa created the Miami-Dade Sea Level Rise Task Force, a group of diverse people, most of whom have been heralds of this information for years. Many were members of the original Miami-Dade Climate Change Advisory Task Force that years ago produced a range of recommendations dealing with adaptation of both our infrastructure and natural resources. The current task force's charge was clear: "To provide a realistic assessment of the likely impacts of sea-level rise and storm surge over time and to make recommendations relative to the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP), Capital Facilities Planning and other priorities."

The final report's recommendations were nothing new. However, they now provide clear directives to county officials to implement step-by-step approaches to planning and a commitment to support and fund these initiatives:

The most alarming aspect of the task force's report is new data provided by the re-insurance company Swiss Re estimating that the expected losses for Southeast Florida by scenario and by hazard are expected to be \$33 billion, or 10 percent of GDP in 2030. They also explained that "adaptation policies implemented now will significantly lower the insurance costs to the county and its residents in the future." Imagine the impact this will have on our property values.

Miami-Dade needs to approach this challenge with the same commitment our community made more than 20 years ago after Hurricane Andrew. We implemented the strongest building codes in the United States against wind damage and we are still considered the gold standard by the rest of the country. Now we need to do the same to adapt to flooding so that we can protect coastal areas, infrastructure, water resources and natural areas. We need to make it a priority to win grants from the federal funds competition recently announced by the Federal Administration for State and Cities with the most innovative plans to adapt to future disasters.

Miami-Dade County has the opportunity to become a global model for resiliency. If we don't, our economy goes out with the tide. We can't wait any longer.