



The Importance of Wind and Water Mitigation

Since 1985, the United States has experienced over 285 weather and climate related disasters. The cost of these disasters exceeds \$1.875 trillion.¹ Further, global climate change has been shown to be increasing the number of and intensity of natural disasters. Meaning, not only will we continue to experience devastating disasters that destroy lives and property, and cost families and society billions of dollars a year, but they will happen with increasing frequency. In order to prepare for and minimize the impact of these events, it is critical that we invest in pre-disaster mitigation.

Mitigation is defined as, “sustained action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects.”² Pre-disaster mitigation can involve a wide variety of projects such as, elevation of existing structures, flood proofing, effective land use and building codes, hurricane shutters, a seawall, surge barriers, and more. The benefits of these projects and other mitigation initiatives are wide-spread, multi-faceted and clear.

Direct market benefits of mitigation:

- Reduces societal losses, deaths, injuries, and homelessness.
 - o Every \$1 spent on mitigation, saves \$6.³
- Reduces time spent on emergency response e.g., ambulance service, police and fire protection.
- Reduces the cost of property insurance for home and business owners.
- Communities are able to get back on their feet faster after a disaster.
- Mitigation projects themselves can create thousands of new jobs.

Non-market benefits include:

- Reduces nonmarket environmental damage e.g., wetland, parks, wildlife.
- Reduces other nonmarket damage e.g., historic sites.

The benefits of mitigation are clear, and the consequences of not investing in mitigation will be devastating. As a society, it is imperative that we invest in pre-disaster mitigation to reduce the impact that natural disasters have on our families and communities. As an individual, call upon your elected officials to adopt policy that prioritizes and invests in mitigation projects in your community.

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¹ Adam Smith, “Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters: Overview,” National Climatic Data Center (NOAA), accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/>.

² “Disaster Mitigation,” Emergency Management - City of New Bedford Official Website (City of New Bedford, Massachusetts), accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/emergency-management/emergencies-disasters/mitigation/#:~:text=Disaster%20Mitigation%20is%20the%20cornerstone%20of%20emergency%20management.&text=Mitigation%20involves%20keeping%20homes%20away,property%20from%20hurricanes%2C%20and%20more.>

³ Laura Lightbody, “Every \$1 Invested in Disaster Mitigation Saves \$6” (The Pew Charitable Trusts, January 11, 2018), [https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/01/11/every-\\$1-invested-in-disaster-mitigation-saves-\\$6.](https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/01/11/every-$1-invested-in-disaster-mitigation-saves-$6)