

High tide for hype on the OBX

Apocalyptic predictions miss the mark on North Carolina sea levels

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A newly released report of a study done for the John Locke Foundation by Patrick J. Michael who is the director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute cast questions on the accuracy of projections of sea level rise being used by the N. C. Coastal Resources Commission upon which they propose to base regulations restricting development in the coastal counties.

The Report's Summary says:

- The North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission's (CRC) forecast of sea level rise from climate change is far greater than the consensus estimate of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The CRC forecasts 38 inches over the next 87 years, while the UN's mean value is about 14 inches from 1990 through 2100.
- Global warming forecasts that are associated with such a large sea level rise are demonstrably erroneous. While global warming is real, and human activities are one cause, it now appears that the most publicized forecasts systematically overestimate the rate of temperature rise.
- Contrary to public perception, Atlantic hurricane activity exhibits no systematic changes in the last hundred years, despite the fact that many storms went undetected prior to the satellite and hurricane-hunter eras.
- Damage from hurricanes exhibits no trend after allowing for the increasing number of coastal residents and changes in property values.
- Sea level rise caused by the melting of land ice is very small and is likely to remain so over the period. Recent research shows that the loss of ice from Greenland is approximately compensated by a gain in Antarctica.

- Residents of the northern Outer Banks experienced sea-level rise in the last 100 years—caused mainly by geologic processes—greater than the mean value forecast by the UN for next hundred years. It is therefore likely that people will similarly adapt in this century.

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