

From the South Florida Business Journal

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/blog/2012/08/sea-level-rise-ultimate-south-beach.html>

# Sea level rise: Ultimate South Beach party wrecker?

South Florida Business Journal by Paul Brinkmann, Reporter

Date: Friday, August 10, 2012, 12:00pm EDT



[Paul Brinkmann](#)

Reporter- *South Florida Business Journal*

[Email](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)

The *Business Journal* broke [a big story today about the city of Miami Beach](#) tackling projections for sea level rise in a new \$200 million storm water plan.

This is a controversial subject, to say the least. The plan is already sparking anger and discussion.

I attended a breakfast meeting at David's Café in South Beach on Tuesday, where very intelligent people said it's too late to save South Florida, and the plan amounts to flushing money down a toilet.

Fifty people – including retired engineers, employees of local real estate companies, politicians – were there, eating huevos habaneros and sipping café con leche.

Some people at the breakfast insisted they have lived near the ocean for years and have seen no change. Others said it's obvious in many places that sea level is higher now than in the recent past.

Regardless of personal observation, four counties in South Florida have formed the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. They have adopted an official report that uses the following range of projections: a minimum one-foot rise in sea level is possible by 2070, but a two-foot rise by 2060 is the maximum. Most of Miami Beach is only 4 feet above sea level, and large areas are lower than that.

"I can tell people to use more efficient light bulbs and reduce their carbon footprint, but frankly it's just too late for that," said [Dan Kipnis](#), a fishing boat captain and member of Miami-Dade County's Climate Change Task Force who spearheaded the discussion for the breakfast group.

Elsewhere, [several Southern states have adopted new laws](#) against using sea level rise projections in public works planning. I'm reminded of the age-old expression about the river in Egypt.

CDM Smith, a global engineering firm, has told Miami Beach it will cost at least \$200 million for a long-term plan that will address rising oceans. The firm used sea level predictions from the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**.

Those predictions, despite growing evidence, are still debated by many people.

For now, the party will continue in South Beach. Rappers [like Will Smith](#), Pitbull and [Flo Rida will continue churning out hit videos](#) with South Beach and the Miami skyline in the background.

But there are some tough decisions to be made about risings seas in the near future. Federal flood zones are being redrawn, beach erosion continues to be more expensive and some very pricey real estate is inches away from being drowned. The city is planning a public meeting at 10 a.m., Friday, Aug. 17, at the Cultural Affairs Program Building, 1755 Meridian Ave., 3rd Floor Training Room, to answer more questions.

When I moved to South Florida in 2007, I had never lived near the ocean, but suddenly it was just a mile away.

At first, I thought a lot about hurricanes, sea level rise and even tsunamis.

After a while, I forgot most of the fretting and enjoyed life here. But this week's events have refreshed the issue in my mind.

Like people at the breakfast meeting, I also noticed [recent news that almost all the ice covering Greenland melted](#) over a four-day period this summer. Around the world, scientists agree this is unprecedented. To ignore warning signs like this is just plain ignorance.