



Resilience Roundup

May 25, 2015

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Local, State and National News Clips

[May 24, 2015 - Northeast marinas scramble to repair damage from deep freeze. Norwich Bulletin](#)

GLASTONBURY - The deep freeze that gripped the Northeast last winter dealt a severe blow to marinas and yacht clubs: Ice snapped pilings in half, shredded wooden docks and left behind wreckage many compare to the effects of a hurricane.

After a scramble to get ready for the all-important Memorial Day weekend, most marinas are back in business, although many are behind schedule and still in need of costly repairs to operate at full capacity. "It's been tough. It's been very tough. The marina was destroyed," said Mindy Kahl, co-owner of Birbarie Marine on a river in Branford. "We will be operational this weekend but nowhere near where we should be."

Hardest hit were yards in rivers and coves that became choked with ice during a record-breaking stretch of frigid weather through February. Crews fought the ice with chain saws and devices that circulate warm water up from below the surface, often to no avail. As the ice rose and fell with the tide, it wrecked pilings and tore apart docks.

Veterans of the waterfront say the damage is the worst they've seen in decades.

Peter Morris, general manager of the Bay Pointe Marina in Quincy, Mass., has had two crews working six days a week to repair damage he estimates at \$1.2 million. The ice pushed his marina off its steel pilings several feet out into a river.

"It's put us a behind about a month and a half," he said.

Since the thaw, demand has been running high for marine construction workers, cranes and replacement pilings - with a run on long, wooden poles in coastal New England sending some to go knocking at farms and telephone companies.

Gary Wetmore, who runs a marine services company in Norwalk, said he has had as much work this spring as he did after Superstorm Sandy struck in 2012. He has been doing repairs up and down Connecticut's Gold Coast on marinas and yacht clubs that were all at least able to open for the holiday weekend.

Now, he is turning his attention to about 100 residential customers still waiting for him to fix their boat launches.

"They're yelling at me," he said.

On New York's Long Island, marinas were getting by without damage until the end of February, when pilings were ripped out during several consecutive days of subzero temperatures, according to Randy Penney, a manager at a Center Moriches company that did repairs for three marinas.

Insurers generally refuse to cover docks, according to marina owners, who say the costs of the damage often cannot be recovered.

"After four years of misery in the boating industry, it got a little better last year with the economy improving. Now we're dealing with this," said Michael Buenaventura, owner of the Seaboard Marina in Glastonbury. After hiring a crane to reset his pilings and rebuilding his ice-smashed docks, Buenaventura had all but 40 of his 160 slips ready for boats as he prepared for Memorial Day weekend.

[May 23, 2015 - As Meriden Hub park takes shape, crews prepare to divert brooks through new channel. My Record Journal](#)

MERIDEN - Earth movers and backhoes roll through the downtown Hub placing rocks along the sides of the soon-to-be single channel, while others grade the earth on both sides of the 14-acre future park.

Workers are building concrete and rock abutments on State and Pratt streets, and two center piers to support the pedestrian bridge that will take visitors from one side of the park to the other.

All the current work is preparing for three diversions that will merge Clark, Jordan and Harbor brooks into the center channel, expected to happen in mid- to late July.

The landscaped park, with its large pedestrian bridge, amphitheater and walkways, is expected to be completed at the end of the year.

"On the State Street side we're going to open the earth to a box culvert and punch a hole into a new channel to allow Clark Brook to flow into Harbor Brook," Public Works Director Robert Bass said last week. "They're going to continue grading, finalizing the electrical plan for lights on the parcel."

A lighting and irrigation control room will be housed in the ground floor area of the abutment on Pratt Street, which also serves as the stairway and ramp to the pedestrian bridge. Workers have already begun setting the concrete and wire conduits for the electrical connection. A longer ramp and stairwell will run parallel to State Street on the other side of the park.

The control area will house the foundation for lighting and irrigating systems for the lawn and landscaping. The park watering will be in zones, but the entire park, its bridges and walkways will be illuminated, Bass said.

The sequencing for diverting the brooks is still being finalized, but similar culverts on the northern end of the park will be breached from separate culverts to release Harbor and Jordan brooks into the channel. The water will be clear, similar to the color at the Coe and Bradley avenues bridge site.

"There will always be water coming through the parcel," Bass said. "In the fall and spring you could see higher than normal conditions but the brook will be contained within those embankments.

Engineers from Milone & MacBroom Inc. developed a water-handling plan that general contractor LaRosa Construction Inc. has followed as the work progressed.

"The sequencing has been very complex," Bass said. "But every day something changes so you're constantly changing operations."

The Hub project is designed to control flooding and is also tied to the downtown redevelopment plan centered on developing a transit-oriented district within a half-mile of the city's train station.

[May 22, 2015 - Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison to get \\$11.5 million makeover, build new nature center. New Haven Register](#)

MADISON >> Things are looking good for the future of Hammonasset Beach State Park.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, DEEP Commissioner Robert Klee, state Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Branford, and other officials joined the Friends of Hammonasset Beach State Park for the ground-breaking ceremony to commemorate the start of major improvements to the park.

Improvements include the construction of the new Meigs Point Nature Center and the repair of West Beach that had been damaged due to recent severe storms.

The project will cost approximately \$11 million - \$3.5 million for the new 4,000-square-foot Meigs Point Nature Center, and \$8.5 million for improvements to West Beach, which will include a 3,430-square-foot building that will house new modern bathrooms, changing areas, offices for Environmental Conservation Police and more.

Ranger Russ Miller of the Meigs Point Nature Center said the new nature center will feature educational exhibits that will place visitors in the environment about which they are learning.

Miller said some of the exhibits will include "In the Woods," an exhibit about wildlife found in forests;

"On the Beach," which will feature things found on the beach; and "In the Air," an exhibit on birds, which will feature live birds in the building as well as mounted birds.

"There's going to be interactive screens with games and things to teach lessons. Slideshows and obviously the touch tank are going to be spectacular things. When you walk into the room, you're going to feel like you're going into water in the Long Island Sound," Miller said. "Fish on the walls, birds above your heads, rippling water above you, a boat suspended from the ceiling; people are going to feel like they're in the environment they're learning about. I think it's an excellent educational opportunity. Lots of really cool things."

Dave Rathbun, chairman of the Design Committee for the Friends at Hammonasset, said the group is working with the two design firms FDR Farmington Design Inc. and Something Fishy.

"We're pretty far into the design of the exhibits at this point. We're dealing with two different companies now. It's still in the design phase right now," said Rathbun. They are going to start building any day now, and it's really going to start to come together."

Moreover, because of the damage done due by Hurricane Irene, the state will construct a new bathhouse which will be built further away from the water, Klee said.

There will be new showers, concession stands and office space, and the parking lot also will be repaired.

"Connecticut is so fortunate to have so many incredible state parks. And the work that's being done here is a result of local friends groups supporting this effort," Kennedy said. "To me, when you teach children about the importance of environmental protection, they become the future stewardships of the environment, and that's what's happening here at Meig's point."

First Selectman Fillmore McPherson said roughly 2 million people visit the park every year, and there is something for everyone to do.

"This park really is the crown jewel of the state's system. Hammonasset appeals to just about everyone of all ages," McPherson said. "People enjoy walking on all of the trails, enjoy staying in the new upgraded campgrounds (and) they enjoy biking or walking on the new greenway trail."

[May 21, 2015 - Obama stresses security threat of climate change. Hartford Courant](#)

President Obama has said it before and has not been successfully rebutted: Climate change is happening. It is being driven in large measure by the burning of fossil fuels, which release heat-trapping carbon dioxide. It is causing rising sea levels, wildfires and severe drought, which in turn fuel political instability in parts of the planet.

As Mr. Obama told graduates of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London on Wednesday, the only way to prevent the worst effects of climate change is for the world "to finally start reducing its carbon emissions - now."

"It will be tough," he added. It has been, so far.

Mr. Obama's speech, his second commencement address at the academy, was a coherent elucidation of his ambitious climate change agenda, tinged with a sense of urgency. He is running out of time in office and, he said, the world is running out of time to slow down the warming of the planet. "Some warming is now inevitable. But there comes a point when the worst effects will be irreversible."

Calling the science "indisputable," Mr. Obama recounted well-known effects of rising seas - the damage done to Lower Manhattan by Storm Sandy, the regular flooding in Miami, Charleston and the Norfolk military bases, the melting of Arctic ice and Alaskan permafrost.

He upped the ante by invoking national security: "Climate change, and especially rising seas, is a threat to our homeland security, our economic infrastructure, the safety and health of the American people."

His message was scarier than Vice President Joe Biden's at Yale's Class Day on Sunday. Mr. Biden, sporting aviator glasses and cracking many jokes, did have a meaningful line or two, such as: "Don't forget about what doesn't come from this prestigious diploma - the heart to know what's meaningful and what's ephemeral."

But Mr. Obama has an urgent alarm to sound. He's made climate change a top priority for the remainder of his second term. He's had trouble, however, bringing the Republican-led Congress onboard, so he's resorted to a series of executive orders. "Going forward," he said Wednesday, "I've committed to doubling the pace at which we cut carbon pollution" on many fronts - more efficient buildings and power plants, renewables, energy research.

The president doubtless had a sympathetic audience on the banks of the Thames River; all of the newly minted ensigns have studied climate change and many have served in the Arctic and seen its effects firsthand. New London understands the threat.

[May 20, 2015 - Text: Obama speech on climate change at Coast Guard Academy, CT Mirror](#)

... "Climate change, and especially rising seas, is a threat to our homeland security, our economic infrastructure, the safety and health of the American people. Already, today, in Miami and Charleston, streets now flood at high tide. Along our coasts, thousands of miles of highways and roads, railways, energy facilities are all vulnerable. It's estimated that a further increase in sea level of just one foot by the end of this century could cost our nation \$200 billion.

In New York Harbor, the sea level is already a foot higher than a century ago - which was one of the reasons Superstorm Sandy put so much of lower Manhattan underwater. During Sandy, the Coast Guard mounted a heroic response, along with our National Guard and Reserve. But rising seas and stronger storms will mean more disaster response missions. And we need the Coast Guard to be ready, because you are America's maritime first responder.

Climate change poses a threat to the readiness of our forces. Many of our military installations are on the coast, including, of course, our Coast Guard stations. Around Norfolk, high tides and storms increasingly flood parts of our Navy base and an airbase. In Alaska, thawing permafrost is damaging military facilities. Out West, deeper droughts and longer wildfires could threaten training areas our troops depend on."...

[May 20, 2015 - Obama Coast Guard Academy speech to highlight threat of climate change, Norwich Bulletin](#)

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama is framing the challenges of climate change as a matter of national security that threatens to aggravate poverty and political instability around the globe and jeopardize the readiness of U.S. forces.

"Make no mistake, it will impact how our military defends our country," the president says in excerpts of a commencement address prepared for delivery Wednesday at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. "And so we need to act and we need to act now."

The president in recent months has pressed for action on climate change as a matter of health, as a matter of environmental protection and as a matter of international obligation. He's even couched it as a family matter, linking it to the worry he felt when one his daughters had an asthma attack as a preschooler.

His speech to the cadets, by contrast, is focused on what the Obama administration says are immediate risks to national security, including contributing to more natural disasters that result in humanitarian crises and potential new flows of refugees. Further, the president sees climate change aggravating poverty and social tensions that can fuel instability and foster terrorist activity and other violence.

Obama said the cadets would be part of the first generation of officers to begin their service in a world where it is increasingly clear that "climate change will shape how every one of our services plan, operate, train, equip and protect their infrastructure."

His prepared remarks said climate change "is not just a problem for countries on the coast or for certain regions of the world. Climate change impacts every country on the planet."

As for the impact in the U.S., Obama pointed to streets in Miami and Charleston, South Carolina, that flood at high tide and to military bases around the country already feeling negative effects.

"Around Norfolk, high tides and storms increasingly flood parts of our Navy base and an air base," Obama said of military facilities in Virginia. "In Alaska, thawing permafrost is damaging military facilities. Out West, deeper droughts and longer wildfires could threaten training areas our troops depend on."

With the Republican-led Congress indifferent to Obama's entreaties, the president has been doing what he can to combat climate change through executive orders to cut greenhouse gas emissions and through the powers of persuasion. But his climate change agenda has drawn strong political opposition and a number of legal challenges. Many of the GOP presidential candidates for 2016 have said that taking unilateral steps to address climate change could hurt the U.S. economy.

Obama's appearance at the Coast Guard Academy was to be his second and last commencement address of the season after speaking earlier this month at a community college in South Dakota. The president traditionally delivers a commencement address every year to one of the service academies.

[May 20, 2015 - Rail advocates turn attention to southeastern Connecticut commuters, New Haven Register](#)

NEW LONDON >> A rail commuter advocacy group generally based in southwestern Connecticut is headed to New London to hear from Shore Line East commuters. [The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council](#) is seeking comment Wednesday from Shore Line East riders about Amtrak cross-honoring tickets, rail line improvements and state expansion plans. The rail council also will discuss a \$30 million project to build a station at Niantic. It's part of Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's 30-year transportation plan. Jim Gildea, vice chairman of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council, said rail advocates want to hear from eastern Connecticut commuters who face issues different from what riders confront elsewhere in the state. State transportation officials, state and local legislators and rail line representatives are expected to attend. The meeting is set for 6 p.m. in New London City Hall.

[May 19, 2015 - Inland Wetlands panel to decide permit for American Industries Thursday, Norwich Bulletin](#)

GRISWOLD - The Inlands, Wetlands and Watercourses Conservation Commission and Aquifer Protection Agency is set to make a decision Thursday concerning a company that residents say has been in violation of its operating agreement with the town for years.

In December, asphalt company American Industries, submitted an application for permits to install changes to the property that would deal with noise and pollution issues that have bothered residents on Johnson Cove and Fairview Avenue for decades.

Fabiola Proulx and her husband, Earl, have lived in the same house on Fairview Avenue for 43 years. Throughout their four decades there, they say American Industries has created noise and air pollution that have changed their quiet neighborhood.

"We can't even open our windows or enjoy our deck because of the smell," Fabiola Proulx said. It's "like if you spill a whole tank of gasoline."

And the issues with the company have gotten steadily worse, the Proulx said,

"Definitely in the last five to eight years they've really picked up," Fabiola Proulx said.

A year and a half ago, residents started complaining to town and state officials

Uniform complaints were filed by 10 residents in the Johnson Cove and Fairview Avenue neighborhood in May 2014 claiming the company has "grossly exceeded the hours of operation" limited in a 1997 stipulated agreement to between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The complaints also said the noise level constituted a legal "nuisance."

The 1997 agreement with the town also stated the asphalt company should comply with air quality and noise regulations, create a buffer of at least 100 feet in depth and the plant's asphalt and excavation

operations cannot be enlarged or extended.

Town officials said American Industries admit they have violated the hours of operation. But they say they have contracts with the state Department of Transportation that require them to operate outside the stipulated hours. The state does much of its paving at night now, officials said.

Kathy Londe, a resident of Johnson Cove Road, said the late night and early morning operations disrupt her sleep.

In September, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection notified the company that its storm water discharges were in violation of state regulations.

The DEEP began inspections after the company failed to submit a completed registration application that ensures government oversight by Griswold's Aquifer Protection Agency. Regulations, which went into effect in March 2012.

In the wake of these complaints and violations, American Industries submitted plans to the Griswold Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inlands, Wetlands and Watercourses Conservation Commission to make changes to company property to ensure they are in compliance with air, noise and water regulations.

The Inland Wetlands commission is scheduled to vote on the permit Thursday.

The planned changes so far include constructing a gravel berm more than 100 feet high that will run from Route 12 and along Johnson Cove Road and constructing buffers and erosion control measures to prevent runoff to the wetlands and roads next to American Industries.

Engineers presenting the planned changes say the berm will cut down on noise that has been bothering residents.

Residents have been impatient for a decision. They brought the issue to a May 12 Board of Selectmen meeting.

Selectman Steve Mikutel said residents have to let the Inlands and Wetlands Commission work out the permits, and let the negotiations with American Industries play out. Once the applications are approved, Mikutel believes the night work may not be an issue if the berm prevents noise.

[May 18, 2015 - Residential energy efficiency in Connecticut were doing well, but could be doing better. Trend CT](#)

Low-income renters haven't benefited from free weatherization programs. Every month on your electric or gas bill, you will notice a surcharge called the 'Combined Public Benefits Charge.' A part of this surcharge pays for Conservation and Load Management (C&LM) programs, which weatherize homes around the state. The amount you pay depends on how much energy you use.

But, according to the [most recent data](#), not everyone who needs these services takes advantage of them - even though everyone helps pay for them, an average of about \$100 a year.

As a whole, Connecticut is making good progress reaching more homes with energy-efficiency programs. That's crucial, because residential properties consume one-third of all energy statewide. Just in New Haven, residents spend about \$167 million per year on home energy costs, including \$43 million on electricity.

But some towns, including New Haven, lag in weatherizing homes. New Haven's population is similar to those of Hartford and Bridgeport, and it has paid a similar amount to help fund the weatherization programs. But, in 2013, almost twice as many residents in Hartford and Bridgeport received benefits from those programs.

To put it simply, New Haven residents are putting a similar amount in, but only getting back half as much.

[May 11, 2015 - High temperatures lead to early opening of RI beaches. The Hour](#)

NARRAGANSETT, R.I. (AP) -- Rhode Island officials have opened three state beaches two weeks early because of the summer-like temperatures in the state.

Scarborough, Roger Wheeler and Misquamicut beaches were open over the weekend.

The Providence Journal reports they also will be open next weekend, along with Lincoln Woods State Park in Lincoln and Goddard State Park in Warwick. Those beaches will be closed on weekdays until May 23.

Rhode Island beaches traditionally open on Memorial Day weekend.

The early opening means lifeguards are on duty and the showers and bathrooms are open. It also means officials are now charging for parking at the beach. It is \$14 for Rhode Island residents and \$28 for non-residents during weekends.

[May 11, 2015 - East Haven begins installation of stone wall for Town Beach, New Haven Register](#)

EAST HAVEN >> The town has started installing a stone wall at its public beach and officials hope it provides a more inviting perimeter for the public area.

Installation of the wall, which will be 470 feet long and 42 inches high once completed, began last week at the Town Beach on Cosey Beach Avenue. The wall is replacing a chain-link fence that has been up for nearly 50 years and ran along the length of the beach border with Cosey Beach Avenue, Mayor Joseph Maturo Jr. said,

"It was mainly out there to keep people out," Maturo said. "Now there certainly is a different feeling. Beaches, for one, can't be private anymore. They're all public beaches for everyone."

The stone wall is being installed by the Public Works Department. Economic Development Director Sal Brancati said the project's total cost is about \$10,000. The Public Works Department also is conducting site work to prepare for the project, Maturo said.

[May 24, 2015 - Turning sewage into drinking water gains appeal as drought lingers, Hartford Courant](#)

It's a technology with the potential to ease California's colossal thirst and insulate millions from the parched whims of Mother Nature, experts say.

But there's just one problem - the "yuck factor."

As a fourth year of drought continues to drain aquifers and reservoirs, California water managers and environmentalists are urging adoption of a polarizing water recycling policy known as direct potable reuse.

Unlike nonpotable reuse - in which treated sewage is used to irrigate crops, parks or golf courses - direct potable reuse takes treated sewage effluent and purifies it so it can be used as drinking water.

It's a concept that might cause some consumers to wince, but it has been used for decades in Windhoek, Namibia - where evaporation rates exceed annual rainfall - and more recently in drought-stricken Texas cities, including Big Spring and Wichita Falls.

In California, however, similar plans have run into heavy opposition.

Los Angeles opponents coined the derisive phrase "toilet to tap" in 2000 before torpedoing a plan to filter purified sewage water into an underground reservoir - a technique called indirect potable reuse.

In 1994, a San Diego editorial cartoonist framed debate over a similar proposal by drawing a dog drinking from a toilet bowl while a man ordered the canine to "Move over..."

Despite those defeats, proponents say the time has finally arrived for Californians to accept direct potable reuse as a partial solution to their growing water insecurity. With Gov. Jerry Brown ordering an unprecedented 25% cut in urban water usage because of drought, the solution makes particular sense for large coastal cities such as Los Angeles, they say.

Instead of flushing hundreds of billions of gallons of treated sewage into the Pacific Ocean each year, as they do now, coastal cities can capture that effluent, clean it and convert it to drinking water.

"That water is discharged into the ocean and lost forever," said Tim Quinn, executive director of the Assn. of California Water Agencies. "Yet it's probably the single largest source of water supply for California over the next quarter-century."

The advocates' hunch that severe drought has changed long-held attitudes on potable reuse may be on the mark.

Recently, a leader in the effort to stop the Los Angeles project more than a decade ago said he still opposed it but might consider a new plan if officials made a solid case for it. He said one of the reasons he opposed the original plan was that "incompetent" officials failed to explain their rationale to residents in the first place.

"You know, toilet to tap might be the only answer at this point," said Van Nuys activist Donald Schultz. "I don't support it, but we're running out of options. In fact, we may have already run out of options."

To be sure, it will be years, or even a decade, before direct potable reuse systems begin operation in California - if ever.

One reason for this is that there is no regulatory framework for the approval of such a system. Currently, a panel of experts is preparing a report to the Legislature on the feasibility of creating such rules. That report is due in 2016.

Potable reuse advocates insist the public's distaste for the concept is based on ignorance. They note that more than 200 wastewater treatment plants already discharge effluent into the Colorado River, which is a primary source of drinking water for Southern California.

"That's what I call de facto potable reuse," said George Tchobanoglous, a water treatment expert and professor emeritus at UC Davis.

In an economic analysis last year, Tchobanoglous estimated that by 2020, potable reuse could yield up to 1.1 million acre-feet of water annually - somewhat less than the 1.3 million acre-feet of water the governor hopes to save through mandatory reductions, and enough to supply 8 million Californians, or one-fifth of the state's projected population.

In potable reuse systems, effluent from a wastewater treatment plant is sent to an advanced treatment facility, where it undergoes a three-step purification process.

First, the water is passed through a microfilter that blocks particles, protozoans or bacteria that are larger than 1/300th the thickness of a human hair. Next, it undergoes even finer filtration in the form of reverse osmosis, in which water is forced through a membrane that blocks fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, viruses and salts. In the third step, ultraviolet light and hydrogen peroxide are used to break down any pathogens or organic compounds that escaped the first two steps.

The result is a purified substance that is cleaner than most bottled waters, according to WateReuse California, a group that advocates for water reuse and desalination. However, it is still sent to a traditional water treatment plant, where it is blended with other sources of water, processed and pumped to household taps.

In an indirect potable reuse system, the water is placed in an "environmental buffer," such as an underground aquifer or surface water reservoir, where it is stored for a period of time before getting processed in a traditional water treatment plant. It is this type of system that was defeated in Los Angeles. Although potable reuse advocates say opposition is often driven by a visceral response to the process, the so-called yuck factor, those who opposed the Los Angeles project said recently that they did so for a variety of reasons, including cost and the potential long-term effects of the trace quantities of drug compounds, hormones and personal care products found in wastewater and surface water.

"Personally I would not drink water that has been recycled through the toilet to tap process," said Steven Oppenheimer, a biology professor at Cal State Northridge. However, Oppenheimer said he would use such water for irrigation, and even household cleaning and bathing.

The presence of so-called contaminants of emerging concern may prove to be one of the main barriers to direct potable reuse. Because of limited scientific knowledge, these compounds are unregulated, meaning that there are no government-prescribed methods for monitoring or removing them.

Tchobanoglous and others insist these substances exist in such small quantities that they don't pose a significant issue.

To some, the contaminant issue argues in favor of using indirect potable reuse systems.

Such a system has been operating since 2008 in Orange County, where purified water is pumped into an aquifer and held for six months before being used as drinking water. Also, after its first failed attempt at establishing an indirect potable reuse system, San Diego approved a second demonstration project years later. It recently won approval to store treated water in an open reservoir as part of a pilot program.

[May 21, 2015 - Study: Atlanta communities are vulnerable to climate change, WABE](#)

In Georgia, the people most vulnerable to climate change are in the metro Atlanta area, according to a new study by scientists at the University of Georgia. Climate change is likely to increase the temperature, cause flooding and drought and raise sea levels in Georgia. However, those aren't just problems for people on the coast or for farmers, said Marshall Shepherd, the director of the atmospheric sciences program at UGA. That's because cities have more concrete and old infrastructure.

"You have an urban heat island; you have the background warming, and you have the propensity for more flooding," Shepherd said.

Plus, he explained, Atlanta has a less adaptable population: a lot of poor people without health or flood insurance -- and even people without air conditioning. "Marginalized populations and groups will always bear more of the brunt of changing climate," Shepherd said.

[May 20, 2015 - Obama Recasts Climate Change as a More Far-Reaching Peril, NY Times](#)

NEW LONDON, Conn. - [President Obama](#) used a commencement address on Wednesday at the Coast Guard Academy to cast his push for urgent action to combat [climate change](#) as a national security imperative, saying that the warming of the planet poses an "immediate risk" to the United States.

The speech was part of an effort by Mr. Obama to make a multipronged case for his ambitious climate-change agenda, which he has identified as a top priority for the remainder of his time in office and as a central element of his legacy. Instead of promoting his plan strictly in environmental terms, he has pitched it as beneficial for the economy, necessary to protect public health and vital to the nation's security.

"I am here today to say that climate change constitutes a serious threat to global security, an immediate

risk to our national security, and, make no mistake, it will impact how our military defends our country," Mr. Obama told about 4,200 people on an athletic field overlooking the water here, including about 200 graduates in crisp white dress uniforms. "And so we need to act, and we need to act now."

Mr. Obama repeated arguments he cites often to promote his climate change effort, including a litany of grim facts and figures about rising temperatures, swelling seas and vanishing sea ice, dismissing skeptics of the phenomenon or those who refuse to act on it as guilty of "negligence" and "dereliction of duty."

"I know there are still some folks back in Washington who refuse to admit that climate change is real, and on a day like today, it's hard to get too worried about it," Mr. Obama said on a sunny day cooled by a chilly sea breeze. "The science is indisputable," he said. "The planet is getting warmer."

But on Wednesday, he coupled those well-worn arguments with a national security-themed call to action to Coast Guard graduates just minutes before they received their commissions. The president argued that climate change has set off dangerous domino effects around the world, prompting a severe drought in Nigeria that was exploited by the terrorist group Boko Haram, and drought, crop failures and high [food prices](#) that "helped fuel the early unrest in Syria" before it descended into civil war.

He told the graduates that their generation would have to invent, build and pioneer the energy-efficient technologies that would be needed to reverse the damaging effects of climate change. He said the Pentagon regarded the planet's warming as a "threat multiplier."

"We all know what needs to happen - it's no secret: The world finally has to start reducing its carbon emissions now," the president said. "This is a place where we need you."

In March, Mr. Obama introduced a blueprint for cutting greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade in the United States by up to 28 percent from its level in 2005 levels. The plan, which hinges on new [Environmental Protection Agency](#) rules intended to drastically reduce planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions from cars and coal-fired power plants, will be the White House's formal submission to the [United Nations](#) ahead of a summit meeting on climate change in Paris in December.

Mr. Obama faces strong opposition on climate change efforts from many Republicans and coal industry officials, who say the proposal is a vast executive overreach and would devastate the economy. Facing such resistance, the president is working to build support in other ways, including his focus on national defense.

"Denying it or refusing to deal with it endangers our national security. It undermines the readiness of our forces," Mr. Obama said. "Politicians who say they care about military readiness ought to care about this as well."

In a report issued on Wednesday, the White House said climate change would act as "an accelerant of instability around the world," prompting water scarcity and food shortages that could escalate tensions and lead to overpopulation. It also said that rising temperatures would "change the nature of U.S. military missions," increasing the demand for resources in the Arctic and coastal regions that would be affected by higher sea levels, and result in humanitarian crises that are larger and more frequent.

The president said the conditions could create a global surge of "climate change refugees - and I guarantee the Coast Guard will have to respond."

Closer to home, Mr. Obama said the effects of climate change were threatening critical infrastructure across the United States, including military posts and training grounds.

"Climate change, especially rising seas, is a threat to our homeland security - our economic infrastructure, and the safety and health of the American people," Mr. Obama said.

[May 20, 2015 - Cities Urged Not To Ignore Marginalized Communities in Climate Change Plans. Think Progress](#)

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI - When Tropical Storm Irene hit in 2011, New York City took protective measures by ordering mandatory evacuations. What it didn't consider, though, was how disabled residents would manage to leave their homes. As a result, the city was sued for allegedly violating the Americans with Disabilities Act. Before the case was resolved, the city was struck by Hurricane Sandy, the most damaging storm in the region's modern history. Residents with disabilities were stranded for days without power in high-rise apartment buildings unable to reach emergency service centers.

While New York was eventually found guilty of "benign neglect" of city residents, the issue of inequity in preparation for climate change impacts - also known as climate adaptation - is not unique. That was at least according to multiple attendees at the National Adaptation Forum in St. Louis last week, who emphasized a greater need for inclusive climate adaptation work in cities across the country. ...

Throughout the week-long conference, frequent examples of "frontline communities" - or low-income neighborhoods already overburdened by environmental injustices and less likely to have resources to

adapt to climate change than their wealthier neighbors - were highlighted to help attendees avoid overlooking their specific needs in adaptation plans. ...

For environmental justice advocates, major cities like New York and Seattle are ahead of the curve in efforts to make official policy more inclusive, but a larger issue lingers. According to the Georgetown Climate Center, only 106 local and regional adaptation plans of some kind exist nationally. Many of those are plans for different sectors of the same city.

[May 19, 2015 - Studies: Climate change to bring more heat waves, stronger hurricanes, USA Today](#)

Talk about your summer bummer. The number of Americans sweltering through stifling heat waves could well quadruple over the next few decades, according to a study Monday in the British journal Nature Climate Change. As if that weren't enough, a separate study in the same journal said hurricanes are likely to become more intense, even as their number declines.

In the heat wave study, researchers said people living in Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas, Houston, Oklahoma City, Phoenix, Tampa and San Antonio are most at risk of enduring many more 95-degree days by 2050. "Extreme heat is responsible for more deaths in the United States than any other weather-related event, and its frequency and intensity is expected to increase over this century," the study said.

[May 19, 2015 - Seacoast vacation homes hit by higher insurance, Boston Globe](#)

A vacation home on the seacoast used to be a retreat. Now, it can be more like a money pit. Owners of summer homes on the coast not only are getting hit with higher flood-insurance premiums, but also a \$250 annual surcharge. The fee, which took effect last month, affects only owners of second homes in flood-prone areas. The surcharge is \$25 for primary residences.

Nationwide, more than a quarter of the 5 million homeowners who use the National Flood Insurance Program are insuring vacation homes, according to a 2013 federal government estimate. While it's unclear how many of the 60,000 policyholders in Massachusetts are covering secondary homes, flood insurance experts say it could affect thousands, from those who have cottages on Scituate's Humarock Beach to owners of clapboard capes in Dennis.

"It's exorbitant," Jack Gleason, a 72-year-old retired teacher from Andover, said of the surcharge. Gleason, who has owned a cottage in Plymouth for more than 40 years, was notified this week that he has to pay the \$250 on top of the hundreds he spends annually for flood insurance.

[May 15, 2015 - Seacoast towns contemplate climate change, NHBR](#)

In the same way they meet to make decisions about building a new school or buying a fire truck, leaders and residents of New Hampshire coastal communities have placed climate change on their agendas, working with experts and examining data that describe how past and projected changes in climate affect the places where they live, work and play.

Communities from Seabrook to Portsmouth have held conversations to identify and implement measures to protect local values now and into the future, and preparing for events such as increased flooding of municipal, residential, and tourism areas and disruptions to businesses and local economies.

In the last 10 years, New Hampshire has submitted 12 "major disaster declarations" to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to recover millions of dollars in damages from severe storms.

[May 13, 2015 - Boston area communities to prepare for climate change, Boston Herald](#)

BOSTON - Cities and towns in the Boston metro area have agreed to work together to prepare for climate change.

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh is expected to make the announcement Wednesday morning at the University of Massachusetts-Boston campus, where the first ever Regional Mayors Climate Preparedness Summit will take place. Walsh's office says 14 Boston-area communities have signed on to the "Metro Boston Climate Preparedness Commitment."

The pledge means cities and towns will work together to address critical regional infrastructure and systems and develop best practices and policy recommendations to deal with climate change. Officials have said the dense coastal region is "highly vulnerable" to the impacts of climate change. The effort will be led by a task force meeting every two months, Walsh's office said.

[May 12, 2015 - Climate change set to take major toll on economy and children's health, experts warn, Climate Wire](#)

Researchers have only scratched the surface of the complex effects climate change will have on children's

health and the economy, panelists said at a climate change forum at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. ... Panelists said the complex nature of the issue makes it difficult for researchers and government officials to quantify the cascading impact climate change will have on quality of life, household income, social justice and health conditions.

"Climate change is this whole new world," said Sylvia Brandt, an associate professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. "The thing that I find most disturbing is the interplay -- the interconnected between all of this."

For example, climate change is expected both to exacerbate asthma in children and increase the prevalence of asthma, she added. Already, about 8 to 10 percent of children in the United States have asthma, but the number is likely to increase dramatically as a result of numerous environmental changes attributed to global warming.

Ragweed, a plant that can trigger allergy-related asthma, will have longer and more productive pollen seasons and could lead to a greater number of hospitalizations of children with asthma. At the same time, the number of days with ground-level ozone pollution is expected to rise. Increased levels of ozone have been connected to lung irritation and can be attributed to 10 to 20 percent of hospitalizations in the summer, according to U.S. EPA.

Growing numbers of extreme heat days can also affect a child's susceptibility to asthma, said Brandt. Hotter days also are associated with lower birth weight and higher risk of pre-term labor, which are independent risk factors for developing asthma.

[May 12, 2015 - Experts cite dire warnings at climate change conference in St. Louis, Belleville News-Democrat](#)

Climate change is here, it's happening and it's affecting America in countless ways, according to a roster of experts who spoke during the first day of the National Adaptation Forum on Tuesday at Union Station. Climate change caused by human activities - principally the burning of fossil fuels - is not just revealing itself in such phenomena as the mega-drought gripping Southern California or historic levels of snowfall that buried the Northeast last winter, according to Katharine Jacobs, director of the Center for Climate Adaptation Science and Solutions.

"At some level the extra energy in the atmosphere is influencing all weather events," Jacobs told a group of journalists attending a seminar on climate and the news sponsored by the Metcalf Institute. And while human-caused climate change does not trigger all unpleasant weather, "climate change is significantly affecting the magnitude of many of these things." ...

Because partisan politics has paralyzed Congress and kept it from meaningful action, the mantle has fallen upon local governments to take the lead in protecting themselves. Cities in particular are leading the way because the effects of climate change are "not hypothetical to them," Jacobs said. "They are seeing sea levels rise and seeing the damage from coastal storms."

[May 11, 2015 - Will the National Flood Insurance Program Be Overhauled, Emergency Management](#)

The move would dramatically reshape a government initiative that insures 5.2 million homes and businesses nationwide.

(TNS) - Lawmakers and federal officials trying to overhaul the National Flood Insurance Program are considering dismantling a sprawling system that relies on more than 80 separate companies to sell policies, collect premiums and calculate damages after disasters.

The move, in response to allegations that claims were underpaid after superstorm Sandy, would dramatically reshape a government initiative that insures 90,000 homes and businesses on Long Island and 5.2 million nationwide.

Though the federal government underwrites flood insurance, it has long hired private companies including Allstate, Travelers and others to sell and manage policies. Those partnerships have allowed Washington to provide coverage without the staff and infrastructure of an entire insurance company. The flood insurance program, however, has been accused in government reports of exerting little oversight of the companies while paying outsized fees and bonuses. And after Sandy, federal lawmakers said the private insurers were overly focused on denying claims instead of ensuring storm victims received fair settlements.

After all of the apparent fraud, abuse and lack of oversight, we have to seriously look at and consider changing the entire model, said Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.).

Gillibrand's call to consider scrapping the system has been echoed by her Democratic colleagues Sen. Charles Schumer of New York and Sen. Robert Menendez of New Jersey.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, which runs the flood insurance program, has asked the senators for recommendations on revamping the system. The agency, meanwhile, is conducting its own internal review.

It's unclear what might replace the system, which allows homeowners to buy the government-backed policies through the scores of different companies. Lawmakers have yet to propose an alternative, saying they want to ensure Sandy victims are properly paid before focusing on long-term reforms.

Insurance industry professionals, however, said it would be folly to terminate the flood insurance program's partnerships with private companies.

The consequences for consumers would be fewer options, less choice and dealing more directly with a government monopoly, said Robert Hartwig, president of the Insurance Information Institute, a Manhattan-based trade group.

The debate comes as FEMA is in talks to settle roughly 1,800 lawsuits filed by homeowners claiming they were underpaid on flood insurance claims after Sandy. Later this month, the agency is launching a process to reopen claims for the other 142,000 policyholders flooded in the 2012 storm.

[May 11, 2015 - Study: Sea level rise is accelerating worldwide, USA Today](#)

The rate that seawater is rising has sped up in the past two decades, according to a study Monday in the British journal *Nature Climate Change*.

The level of ocean water has risen 2.6 to 2.9 millimeters - about a tenth of an inch - each year during the past 20 years, the study said. That may not seem like much, but it translates into much extra water in the oceans that can more easily swamp coastal cities.

The study contradicted previous reports that said the rate had slowed in the past few decades. The latest study's lead author, scientist Christopher Watson at the University of Tasmania in Australia, said his report used more precise satellite and tidal gauge data to measure the sea level.

Throughout the 20th century, sea levels rose about 1.7 millimeters a year.

Heat-trapping greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels for energy cause more glaciers and ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica to melt. The process causes the water to expand, because warmer water takes up more space than cooler water.

The rising sea level has already impacted U.S. coastal cities. Parts of Norfolk, Va.; Charleston, S.C.; and Miami flood at high tides, in so-called sunny-day or nuisance flooding, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Other cities, such as New Orleans and New York, have been devastated by flooding from storm surges, which are magnified by the rise in the sea level.

The sea level has risen nearly 8 inches worldwide since 1880, the start of the Industrial Revolution, according to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Global sea level will rise about 1 foot to slightly more than 3 feet (39 inches) by 2100, the U.N. panel said. NOAA has projected sea levels could rise even higher, as much as 6½ feet, by the end of the century.

Announcements

[June 11, 2015 - West Haven: Ready for Tomorrow Tour Announced!, Register by June 1, 2015, Connecticut Association of Flood Managers, CIRCA and City of West Haven](#)

West Haven: Ready for Tomorrow Tour Announced!

Coastal Connecticut suffered a variety of damage as a result of Tropical Storm Irene and Superstorm Sandy. In order to promote resiliency and reduce future damages, the City of West Haven has secured grants for resiliency projects and property buyouts. CAFM is partnering with UConn's Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) to offer a walking tour of proposed resiliency projects in West Haven.

Date: June 11, 2015.

Register by June 1, 2015

Registration cost is \$10 and includes lunch.

For more information and the registration form, please click here: [2015_06-11 West Haven Resiliency](#)

[June 24, 2015 - Living Shoreline Workshop Part 2, UCONN Sea Grant and CLEAR Climate Adaptation Academy](#)

The Second of a Three Part Series: This workshop is the 2nd in a series of workshops, Living Shorelines II will focus on an integrated approach to living shorelines and review examples of living shorelines

installations in CT and other states.

Date: June 24, 2015

Location: UConn Avery Point Campus, Academic Building Rm 106 , UConn Avery Point

1084 Shennecossett Rd. Groton, CT 06340

More information can be found [here](#).

The *Resilience Roundup* highlights CIRCA's presence in the news, provides links to recent local/state/national news articles related to resilience and adaptation, and announces upcoming events and seminars.



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