

**From:** Mayor Philip Levine <info@mayorphillevine.com>  
**To:** jeevacation@gmail.com  
**Subject:** A Community of Certainty  
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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

In his debut article "[Climate of Complete Certainty](#)" for the New York Times' op-ed page, Bret Stephens (who recently left the venerable Wall Street Journal) makes a controversial argument for "less certitude

about our climate future". He goes on to compare the Clinton campaign's overreliance on flawed data in the 2016 election with the perils of total certitude in climate change's effects.

Mr. Stephens is right, but only on one point. Overreliance on data can lead you astray if you're not careful. It's true that the Clinton campaign might have been wise to look less at the numbers, and listen more to the facts on the ground. Throughout middle America and large swathes of our country, if you put your ear to the ground and ignored the pundits, you could get a sense of what was coming: a populist upswell, demanding change from business-as-usual in Washington.

There were deniers that didn't pay attention to the rising political tide in 2016, and are now dealing with the results, whether happily or sadly.

In Miami Beach and in coastal cities around the world, we have been facing our own upswell-sea level rise. It is eroding our beaches, surging onto our streets with sunny day flooding, destroying cars and homes. Regardless of what data you follow, or which reports you choose to believe, the climate is changing and sea levels are rising.

Here in Miami Beach, we are a community of certainty. That's why when I took office as Mayor in 2013, our first actions were to immediately secure emergency funding to raise our roads and install storm pumps in low-lying areas. Sea-level rise isn't the subject of partisan debate when you can see it flooding your streets and threatening your livelihood. (Perhaps President Trump might change his skepticism about this "Chinese hoax" when the roads eventually need to be raised outside of his beloved Mar-a-Lago.)

While I am a proud card-carrying member of the 36% of Americans Mr. Stephens cited who do believe that climate change is a serious issue, unfortunately our state and federal government are not. This even includes our own Governor Rick Scott of Florida, who reportedly banned the words "climate change" from official communications in a state where a significant portion of our towns and beaches are threatened by climate change.

Time is running out, and we need all of the help we can get-especially from the op-ed writers for a great media organization dedicated to the truth. In the end, this is not about winning an argument, but about solving an urgent problem.

And so, I would ask Mr. Stephens to take his own advice: don't just listen to the data; come and experience the effects firsthand. I guarantee that if Mr. Stephens takes a trip down here to Miami Beach during king tides, we can baptize him as a climate change believer in no time!

An edited version of this Op-Ed appeared today in The Miami Herald. Please click [here](#) to read.

Sincerely,

Philip Levine  
Mayor of Miami Beach



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