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To: jeevacation@gmail.com
Subject: Op-ed: Miami Beach moving to fight back
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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

One of the pledges I made during last year's mayoral campaign was to fix what's broken and to make things work for the residents and visitors of Miami Beach. Investing in our

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aging infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise has been a focal point of our first year in office. The positive effects of these efforts were visible during the annual October King Tides, which typically bring "sunny day flooding" to flood-prone areas throughout Miami Beach.

Below is an Op-Ed published in today's Miami Herald detailing our current efforts to combat sea level rise and the investments that we, as elected officials, have made to secure Miami Beach's future. We are very pleased with the initial results of our new stormwater pump stations, which show that the pumping system can and will work. We are not declaring victory. This is one small battle in a long-term war we are fighting against rising sea levels.

Sincerely,

Philip Levine
Mayor

Miami Beach moving to fight back

Mayor Philip Levine

The truest measure of any society, or any person, is the willingness to protect a future they will never personally experience.

Call it what you will - caring for others, having a conscience, paying it forward - but this is precisely what defines and motivates the best in all of us. This is especially true when the cause is universal, the effects are close to home, and the outcome is uncertain.

Like America's "greatest generation," who, at a critical moment in time, stood together to defeat the terror of Nazi Germany.

Like President John F. Kennedy, who stared down Kruschev-like dictators banging shoes on tables to claim what was never theirs.

Like President Ronald Reagan, who inspired a nation to believe again after a prolonged time of doubt and despair.

Today, we are all facing another test of will and determination.

Rising sea levels, reflecting a rapidly changing and unpredictable climate, now pose a current and future threat to coastal cities from Miami Beach and New York to London and Tokyo.

As the waters rise, rest assured they won't ask whether you're a Republican or a Democrat; conservative or liberal; white, black or Hispanic.

So instead of self-serving demonizing and demagoguing that tears us apart, let's work together to find remedies and answers that serve others.

Instead of conjecturing about things we don't know, let's focus on things we do. Here are four truths:

Fact: Climate change is affected by human behavior and misbehavior, affirmed by leading scientists and experts from the National Academy of Sciences and NASA, to the American Meteorological Society, Army Corps of Engineers, and United Nations.

Fact: We can debate how much greenhouse gases affect weather, sea levels, and human health, but not whether they do at all.

Fact: Sea levels along America's East Coast are projected to rise three to four times faster than the global average over the next century, and rising water levels around Miami Beach

- a barrier island built over natural mangrove wetlands - are causing increased street and property flooding.

Fact: If we do nothing, we have only ourselves to blame, and the "something" many fear becomes more likely.

Here in Miami Beach, the frequency of flooding has increased, and it's not uncommon to see parked cars inundated by quickly rising flood waters, pedestrians walking barefoot through knee-high waters, or even property flooding on a day full of sunshine.

We must weather storm surge, and scientific studies predict extreme weather events such as storms, floods, and hurricanes will increase in frequency and intensity.

Although extreme impacts from these threats may still be a few decades away, Miami Beach is moving today - and together - to fight back. As Mayor, beyond the personal and financial security of our residents, and the health of the local economy, this is my biggest priority.

In the short term, we have developed a three- to five-year plan built around the installation of 60 pump stations and one-way flex valves throughout our City.

This initiative is already paying dividends. During our annual King Tide, where sea levels reach peak elevation, and when historically certain Miami Beach streets are flooded, this year streets in the lowest areas were repaired and DRY - one very positive step in a long journey in our ongoing battle.

Moving forward, over time we intend to raise roads, sidewalks, and other infrastructures; to impose stricter development regulations providing higher finished floor elevations, and creating additional storage areas for collecting stormwater.

To reduce our carbon footprint caused by the release of greenhouse gasses, the city will lead its residents by example through increased investments in multi-modal mass transit, better pedestrian and bicycle flow, and energy efficiency.

We're getting smarter by the day in knowing the questions that must be asked, and as Mayor of Miami Beach there's nothing I won't do, no place I won't go, to seek the answers to one of the greatest challenges society as we know it has ever confronted.

As Great Britain faced an impending invasion during World War II, Winston Churchill said, "We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

These words still guide us today, in the fight to secure our future.



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