

Sandy and climate change: predictions and responses

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Superstorm Sandy's landfall on the northeastern US coast was forecast remarkably well in the days leading up to it. That forecast enabled many life-saving preparations. On the other hand, the risks to our infrastructure of a Sandy-like event had been known for decades, but little investment was made in the resilience of that infrastructure to such an event. This conforms to a historical pattern in which science-based warnings of the risk of a future disaster are not taken seriously enough to spur investment if a disaster of that type has not happened in recent historical memory. This pattern will not serve us well as we prepare for further human-induced climate change, including increasing risk of Sandy-like coastal floods due to sea level rise.