

# Report sees hefty cost of climate change on US economy

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Former US Treasury Secretaries Henry Paulson (L) and Robert Rubin participate in a panel discussion on November 17, 2008 in Washington

The US faces huge economic costs from climate change, including massive property loss from sea-level rise and major declines in some crop yields, according to a bipartisan report released Tuesday.

The report, titled "Risky Business" and backed by former Treasury

Secretaries Henry Paulson and Robert Rubin and others, said the price of continued US policy foot-dragging on [climate change](#) will vary by region.

Based on current trends, between \$66 billion and \$106 billion of existing coastal property will be below [sea level](#) by 2050, with as much as \$507 billion worth below sea level by 2100, the report said. The worst impacts are forecast in the eastern seaboard and Gulf of Mexico coast.

More extreme heat will weigh the economy. By the middle of the century, the average American will likely see 27 to 90 days over 95 degrees Fahrenheit each year, two or three times more than the average over the last 30 years.

This shift will hit productivity in construction, agriculture and other outdoor occupations, the report said. The impact will be worst in the southwest, southeast and upper midwest, where demand for air conditioning will surge.

Hotter weather could also result in a fall in average annual [crop yields](#) of 50-70 percent in the southeast, lower Great Plains and midwest of such goods as corn, soy, cotton and wheat, the report said.

While food systems are generally resilient at a national level, the shifts "still carry risks for the individual farming communities most vulnerable to projected climatic changes," the report said.

The report, released by Paulson and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and billionaire Democratic donor and climate activist Thomas Steyer, said the response of the agriculture industry, bond markets and other pockets of the economy show climate change is beginning to be addressed by decision-makers.

"But business still tends to respond only to the extent that these risks intersect with short term financial and planning decisions," the report said.

"American businesses should play an active role in helping the public sector determine how best to react to the risks and costs posed by climate change, and how to set the rules that move the country forward in a new, more sustainable direction."

The [report](#) called for more muscular US policy to cut emissions and adapt to a changing climate. But it did not include specific proposals or discuss leading controversies, such as the debate on the Keystone pipeline.

**More information:** The Risky Business report is posted on the web site [riskybusiness.org](http://riskybusiness.org).

The American Climate Prospectus is posted online at [climateprospectus.rhg.org](http://climateprospectus.rhg.org).

The sea-level rise projections paper is available at [dx.doi.org/10.1002/2014EF000239](https://dx.doi.org/10.1002/2014EF000239)

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