



Sunset Beach Sanitary District Climate Change Policy & Action Plan

A. Purpose: The Sunset Beach Sanitary District (the District) is dedicated to planning and preparing, in all ways possible, for the present and future impacts of Climate Change. According to the U.S. EPA, wastewater infrastructure is particularly at risk from flooding due to the low elevation at which these facilities are generally located. The District has already experienced the effects of climate change with higher than average tides and storm surges. Ocean levels are predicted to continue to rise, especially during high tides and storms. The purpose of this Climate Change Policy & Action Plan is to document the present and future preparations made by the District to address those effects.

B. Climate Change Defined: Climate Change is defined as the long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns which may pose risks by causing storm surges, rising sea-levels, wildfires, and other catastrophic events.

C. Climate Change Vulnerability Defined: Climate Change Vulnerability is used to define climate change effects to which the District's infrastructure may be susceptible.

D. District Geography Contributing to Climate Change Vulnerability: The following District geographic characteristics have been identified as contributing to the District's Climate Change Vulnerability:

1. The District service's area includes the low-lying coastal communities located in portions of the Cities of Huntington Beach and Seal Beach.
2. Elevations within the District vary from 5 to 10 feet above mean sea level.
3. Geographically, the District's service area forms a marine peninsula; the Pacific Ocean to its West, Huntington Harbour to its East, and the Anaheim Bay to its North. Also, to its South, lies the coveted Bolsa Chica Ecological Wetlands Reserve and the Bolsa Bay Marsh, which is included on the 2022 State Water Resources Control Board's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. The District's entire jurisdiction is all within 500-feet of ocean water.

E. Potential Climate Change Vulnerabilities: The District's Engineer and Board of Directors have identified the following Potential Climate Change Vulnerabilities:

1. Pump Station Failure - The District owns and operates a single pump station, which serves the entire District. Built in the 1930's, the pump station has been in continuous operation since 1935. Storm surges, higher tides, and rises in overall sea levels subject the pump station to system failure resulting in sanitary sewer overflow adversely affecting the health of the District's residences and businesses.
2. Exfiltration of 3,200-foot Force Main – The District's 3,200-foot force main was constructed in 1983. Rising high-tides and sea-levels resulting from Climate Change could result in exfiltration from the District's force main. Such a result could cause a sanitary sewer overflow which would adversely affect the health of the District's residential and business users.
3. Ground-Water Infiltration of Private Sewer Laterals - Currently, old and cracked Private Sewer Laterals allow for groundwater infiltration. Increased flooding from Climate Change would increase the chances of a sanitary sewer overflow.
4. Manhole Flooding – Increased flooding from Climate Change results in the increase of water from flooded streets to infiltrate the sewers.
5. Yard and Roof Drains – While not permitted by District Ordinance, existing residential yard and roof drains could overtax the District's sewer systems due to increased rainfall from Climate Change.

E. Action Plan to Adapt and Mitigate Climate Change Vulnerabilities:

In order to address each of the above Climate Change Vulnerabilities, it is the policy of the District to take all actions available to prepare the District's sewage collection system for more frequent flooding from higher ocean water levels and storm surges. It is the District's intent to reduce threats to its public's health and safety and to build climate sustainability and resiliency through this Action Plan.

Specifically, the District's Board, through its District Engineer, is committed to considering the design and construction of projects to adapt to, and mitigate, potential damages to its infrastructure, resulting from Climate Change flooding and storm surges, as follows:

1. Abandon the Broadway Pump Station. The Broadway Pump Station, built in 1935, pumps about 90% of the District's total sewage. The pump station is a below grade (under the street) facility. Climate induced higher tides combined with storm surge could flood the pump station, rendering the below grade electric motors inoperable. Due to the current placement of the pump station, it is inherently vulnerable to sea level rise, flooding, and storm surges.
2. Stronger enforcement of the District's Sewer Ordinance which requires service laterals to be replaced or lined with a plastic liner if major construction takes place on the property, in order to prevent infiltration of groundwater from old and cracked sewer laterals when yards flood.
3. All manholes shall be retrofitted with new composite manhole covers that have a compression seal to prevent water from flooded streets to infiltrate the sewers.
4. Prohibit any yard or roof drains from connecting to the sewer system.
5. All newly constructed facilities shall be designed with the best water tight materials with conscience awareness of the potential for increased flooding due to higher ocean levels.
6. Infrastructure Projects will use natural and green materials to reduce flood risks when feasible.

The above Climate Change Policy and Action Plan are to be re-evaluated at least once during the fiscal year, during the creation, adoption, and possible amendment of the District's budget, for the purpose of prioritizing capital projects with Climate Change in mind.