

# GET READY...HERE COMES THE OCEAN SEA LEVEL RISE IS THE REAL DEAL



Left: Sandyland/Sand Point (Branden Aroyan) / Right: Predictive coastal flooding in Carpinteria (including Sandyland/Sand Point) due to SLR in 2100 (Our Coast Our Future, prepared by NOAA Office for Coastal Management, based on USGS sea level rise and storm scenarios models)

The Santa Barbara Airport flooded. Goleta Beach Park gone. The ocean washed over Cabrillo Blvd. – are these scenarios sensationalism? No. The above scenarios will come to pass by 2100 if nothing is done to prevent such inundation.

Sea level rise, directly caused by climate change, is a serious threat, and the **King Tides of December 22-23, 2018 & January 20-21, 2019** gave us a hint of what the future looks like for Santa Barbara if we do nothing but talk about it.

A picture is worth a thousand words. During the King Tides of the past December and January, HTO contracted with **On the Wave** photographer **Harry Rabin** and well-known surf photographer **Branden Aroyan** to photograph Sandyland/Sand Point (Carpinteria coast area), Miramar Beach, Goleta Beach, and the Santa Barbara Airport, among other coastal spots.

The photos speak for themselves. All these areas are at risk of flooding — even now, in a high tide/storm event. Years ago, as climate change symposiums, plans, and analyses began to proliferate, HTO made strong input about adaptation to sea level rise. Years ago, we recognized how much of our infrastructure is located in flood zones, directly in the path of the incoming ocean. We maintained then, and emphasize now, that we must act. **A building permitted today should last longer than 30-50 years.** All the money spent on expanding the Santa Barbara Airport might have been better spent building a monorail to the Santa Maria Airport — because the Santa Barbara Airport is already flooding, and will only get worse with time and storms to come.



Left: Goleta Slough/Airport (Harry Rabin) / Right: Predictive coastal flooding in Goleta Slough due to SLR in 2100 (NOAA Our Coast Our Future)



## ANALYSIS PARALYSIS

In 2015, the City of Goleta did a **Coastal Hazards Vulnerability Assessment** that evaluated the time and cost of moving back the infrastructure for the Goleta Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant (now the Goleta Sanitary Water Resource Recovery District). This is the type of action all cities with coastal wastewater infrastructure should be doing now.

Instead, we are delayed due to meetings about having meetings. We are assessing assessments. We are creating action plans about taking action. We are looking at the ocean coming in like the proverbial **Deer in Headlights**.

Heal the Ocean recognizes the planning and forecasting that occurs with climate change adaptation will take much time, money, and planning. However, we want to stress, that there is, in Santa Barbara County, **a list of issues already studied**, with time and money already spent—to fix, remedy, and pay for, some of the situations we know are coming. Including:

- Disallowing building in flood zones (including airports);
- Cleaning up toxic pollution in groundwater, which is expected to rise along with sea levels;
- Halting septic system installation in flood zones (and removing those that are already in high groundwater);
- Changing permitting requirements in the coastal zone (require setbacks, pilings, etc.)
- Starting cost feasibility and preliminary engineering to waterproof, raise, or relocate vulnerable wastewater treatment plants, which will otherwise flood;

**Heal the Ocean has had this view since 2014**, and we continue to campaign for these, and other preventative measures, to prepare for things to come.

Photos: Miramar Beach/by Branden Aroyan; Santa Barbara Harbor/Harry Rabin; Goleta Beach/Branden Aroyan