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Title: *Climate-Induced Community Relocation In Alaska: Institutional Strategies*

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In Alaska, winter temperatures have increased 3.5 degrees Celsius since the 1950s, arctic sea ice is decreasing in size and thickness and permafrost is thawing. These environmental phenomena are causing accelerated rates of erosion and flooding, which damage or destroy infrastructure, such as health clinics and schools, and threaten the livelihoods and well-being of people residing throughout Alaska. The federal and state governments have issued numerous reports since 2003 documenting these climate change impacts on Alaskan communities and the need for immediate action to protect populations. In 2003, the US General Accounting Office found that flooding and erosion affect 184 out of 213 of Alaska Native villages and four of these communities planned to relocate due to these environmental threats. Six years later, the GAO issued a second report and found that erosion and flooding imminently threatened 31 Alaskan communities and 12 of these communities planned to relocate. State and federal government agencies are struggling to respond to the enormous new needs of these communities. Despite spending millions of dollars, the traditional methods of erosion control and flood protection have not been able to protect some communities. The inability of technology to protect people who reside in vulnerable risk-prone coastal and riverine communities is an issue that could affect millions of people all over the world. The recent devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy exemplifies these risks. The state governments of New York and New Jersey are now evaluating whether rebuilding these coastal communities is possible and whether erosion and flood control infrastructure can protect these places in the future. This paper describes the Alaskan experience with these issues. For several Alaska Native communities protection in place is not possible and community relocation is the only adaptation strategy that can protect them from accelerating climate change impacts.

Abstract text