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New Report Strengthens Economic Case for Flood-Prepared Infrastructure.

Mitigation projects yield positive return on investment in coastal, inland states

From elevating roadways in Nebraska to moving wastewater treatment plants away from flood plains in Iowa, proactive measures before flooding can provide a major return on investment, according to a new report from the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS). The report, "[Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: Utilities and Transportation Infrastructure](#)," provides analysis and key examples that underscore the benefits of investing in mitigation measures.

The report was released Oct. 30 during a [webinar](#) co-hosted by the institute and The Pew Charitable Trusts. Ryan Colker, NIBS vice president, and Philip Schneider, director of NIBS' Multihazard Mitigation Council, provided an overview of the report, including cost-benefit assessments of flood-related case studies. The webinar also featured Melissa Clow, a civil engineer and special projects administrator for Iowa City, Iowa, who discussed the city's disaster mitigation work on a bridge and major road.

In developing the report, NIBS examined natural hazard mitigation investments across the country that included upfront spending on infrastructure projects—such as raising roads above anticipated flood levels and moving water treatment plants outside of flood plains—as well as near- and long-term maintenance. Benefits included avoiding replacement or repair of damaged infrastructure and disruptions to daily life from impacts such as closed roads, impaired public safety, and loss of essential services like water and electricity. Of the 21 case studies analyzed in the report, 10 focus on mitigating the impacts of flooding on infrastructure—projects involving roads, bridges and railways, water and wastewater facilities, and electric and telecommunications substations.

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The Pew Charitable Trust

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