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The 5 Coastal States That Face the Most Devastating Flood Risk.

Florida, Louisiana and New Jersey lead the list of states with critical infrastructure in the path of rising seas, a new study says.

Flooding can disrupt communities not only by damaging homes and businesses, but also by knocking out facilities that provide essential services. When school buildings flood, students miss out on not only learning days but also access to subsidized meals. When hospitals get inundated, lifesaving treatments can get put on hold.

Storms like Hurricane Debby, which is set to saturate parts of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina with up to 30 inches of rainfall over this week, are becoming more frequent and severe in a warming world. But as sea levels rise, it doesn't necessarily take a major storm to bring high water: Since 2000, chronic tidal flooding — also known as sunny day flooding — surged 400% and 1,100% in the US Southeast Atlantic and Gulf Coast regions, respectively.

According to a recent report from the Union of Concerned Scientists, there are about 900 "critical infrastructure" sites along the US coastlines at risk of high-tide flooding at least twice a year. That figure can jump up to 1,600 by midcentury, affecting some 3 million people, largely in disadvantaged communities.

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By Linda Poon

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