

# Regional Impacts of Coastal Land Loss: Baton Rouge Region



Louisiana is facing a coastal land loss crisis — nearly two thousand square miles of land has been lost over the last 100 years, and an equal amount could potentially be lost over the next 50 years. Businesses, homes, infrastructure and whole communities could be lost or suffer severe economic damages in a ‘future without action’ — a term used by state planners that means a future in which no coastal restoration projects or protection are completed. If nothing is done to address Louisiana’s land loss problem, significant economic losses will be experienced at the national, state and regional levels through flooding and destruction of buildings, roads and railways, as well as the impact to jobs and disruption of the flow of commerce connected to Louisiana’s coast.

The accompanying report *Regional Impacts of Coastal Land Loss and Louisiana’s Opportunity for Growth* released in March 2017 by LSU’s Economics & Policy Research Group and Environmental Defense Fund looks in detail at the five southern regions of the state to quantify the economic impact of land loss in Louisiana as well as the economic opportunity of pursuing the state’s Coastal Master Plan. This fact sheet highlights results from the Baton Rouge region.

## Baton Rouge Overview

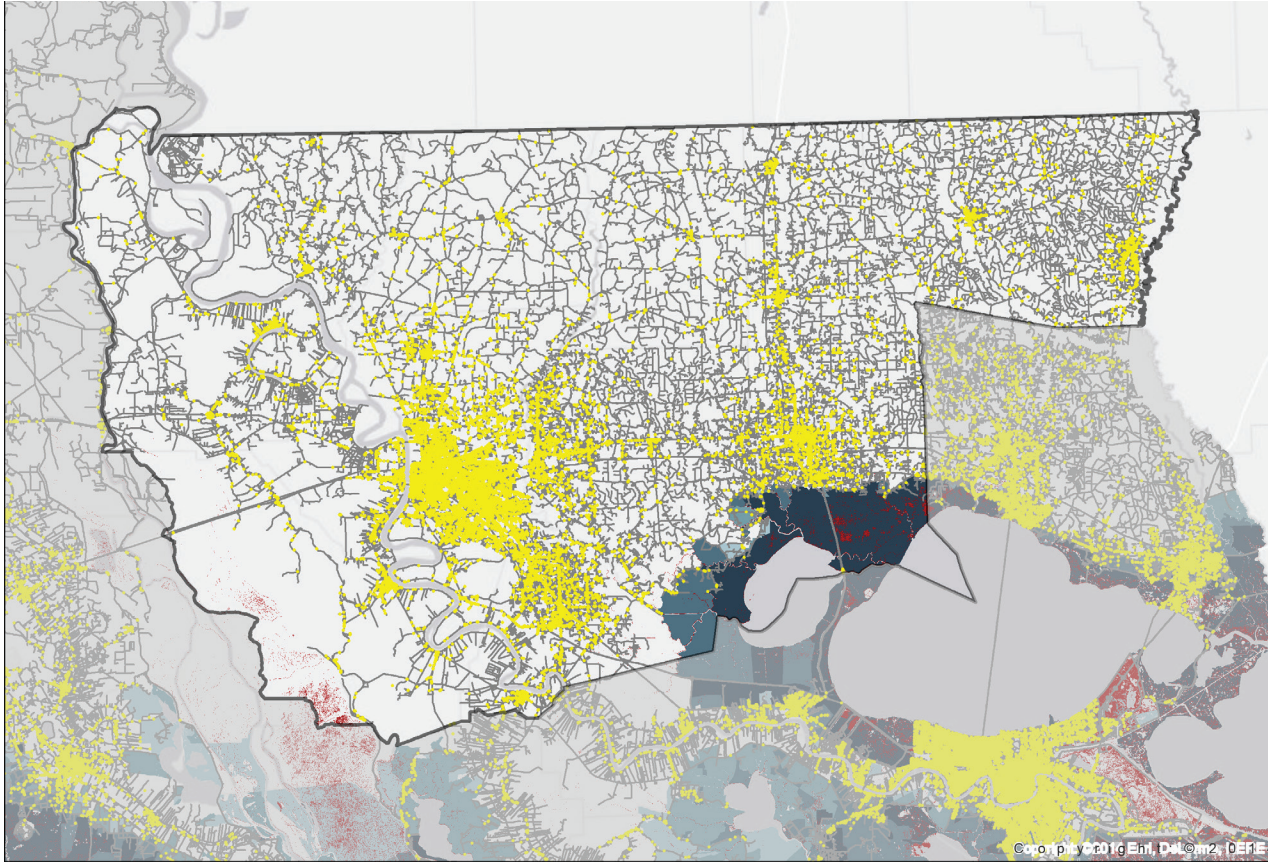
- ▶ Baton Rouge Region includes:
  - ▶ Parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana
  - ▶ Cities: Baton Rouge and Hammond
  - ▶ 25,000 businesses and 430,000 jobs
- ▶ Healthy construction industry indicates growing economy
- ▶ Strong manufacturing center along Mississippi River in this region
- ▶ Relatively far inland, but strong economic connections with coastal regions link Baton Rouge to the economic risks posed by land loss

## Land Loss

- ▶ Physical damage in the Baton Rouge region relatively small
- ▶ Faces sizeable impact on business activity due to economic links with New Orleans, Lafayette, and others
  - ▶ 3800 jobs, \$140 million in wages, and \$600 million in output at risk due to land loss

## Storm Damage

- ▶ Case study storm with the biggest impact: Eastern Storm
- ▶ Total physical damage in Baton Rouge region relatively small
- ▶ Impacts on economic activity much larger due to connections with heavily impacted coastal regions
  - ▶ Potential for severe damage in New Orleans, which has substantial indirect impact on the region
  - ▶ Storm damage across the coast attributable to land loss would generate \$1.3 billion in lost labor productivity and \$4.6 billion in lost output in Baton Rouge
    - 9% statewide economic impact of land loss would be in the Baton Rouge region



Map key: yellow represents current location of businesses, red represents land loss in 50 years from 2012 less optimistic scenario, and blue represents flooding from a 100-year storm after the land loss shown in red.

*Most people don't associate coastal land loss with the Baton Rouge Region, but this report shows that the economic disruptions could be severe. Over the past few years, Baton Rouge has established itself as a globally-recognized destination for companies and countries seeking to solve complex coastal, deltaic and other water challenges, thanks to our being home to Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Louisiana State University, The Water Institute of the Gulf and The Water Campus.*

— Kyle Zeringue  
Senior Vice President, Baton Rouge Area Chamber

This fact sheet is one of a series that identifies economic costs, in a future without coastal protection and restoration, to five regions: Baton Rouge, Houma, Lafayette, Lake Charles, and New Orleans. For more details on economic risks facing these regions under different land loss and storm scenarios, please see the full report: *Regional Impacts of Coastal Land Loss and Louisiana's Opportunity for Growth* (available on the websites below). That report also identifies the jobs, wages, and economic growth supported at the state level by investing in coastal restoration. By investing in the coast and implementing the Coastal Master Plan, Louisiana has a compelling opportunity to reduce potential losses, while also boosting the state's economy.

**Environmental Defense Fund** (edf.org), a leading international nonprofit organization, creates transformational solutions to the most serious environmental problems. EDF links science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships. Connect with us on EDF Voices, Twitter and Facebook.

Based in the **E. J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University**, the **Economics & Policy Research Group** (EPRG) is an applied economics research unit of the Department of Economics focused on advancing the scientific knowledge base on topics relevant to Louisiana's economy. LSU EPRG aims to contribute advances to the general body of economics research, inform public decision making, support economic development, and promote a strong, resilient Louisiana economy accessible to all Louisiana residents.

[business.lsu.edu/eprg](http://business.lsu.edu/eprg)

**For more information, contact:**

Elizabeth Van Cleve, Environmental Defense Fund, 202-553-2543, [evancleve@edf.org](mailto:evancleve@edf.org)

Alison Satake, LSU Media Relations, 225-578-3870, [asatake@lsu.edu](mailto:asatake@lsu.edu)

Full report can be downloaded at the following site: [edf.org/LSU-report](http://edf.org/LSU-report)