Regional Impacts of Coastal Land Loss: Lafayette 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 Lafayette region.

Lafayette Overview

- Lafayette Region includes:
  - Parishes: Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Vermilion
  - Cities: Lafayette, Morgan City, Franklin, and Opelousas
  - 18,000 businesses and 277,000 jobs
- Largest concentration of oil and gas workers in the state

Land Loss

- Total replacement costs for land loss damage could be as much as $140 million
  - 4% of statewide replacement costs come from Lafayette
- Land loss would lead to loss of 2,200 jobs, $90 million in annual wages, and $390 million in annual output
  - 10% of statewide employment impact from land loss comes from Lafayette

Storm Damage

- The Lafayette region faces direct risks of physical damage, as well as exposure to sizeable economic impacts from damage elsewhere along the coast. The Western track storm would generate the greatest direct damage due to land loss, but the Eastern track storm has a larger impact on economic activity.
- Total increase in replacement costs attributable to land loss is $5.2 billion from the Western track storm and $1.8 billion from the Eastern track storm.
  - Total economic impact on Lafayette from the Western track storm is $2.3 billion while the economic impact of the Eastern track storm is $3.0 billion
  - Economic links with New Orleans, which would experience severe flooding due to land loss in the Eastern storm case study, create larger disruptions to the Lafayette economy than in the Western track storm despite more direct damage in the Western storm.

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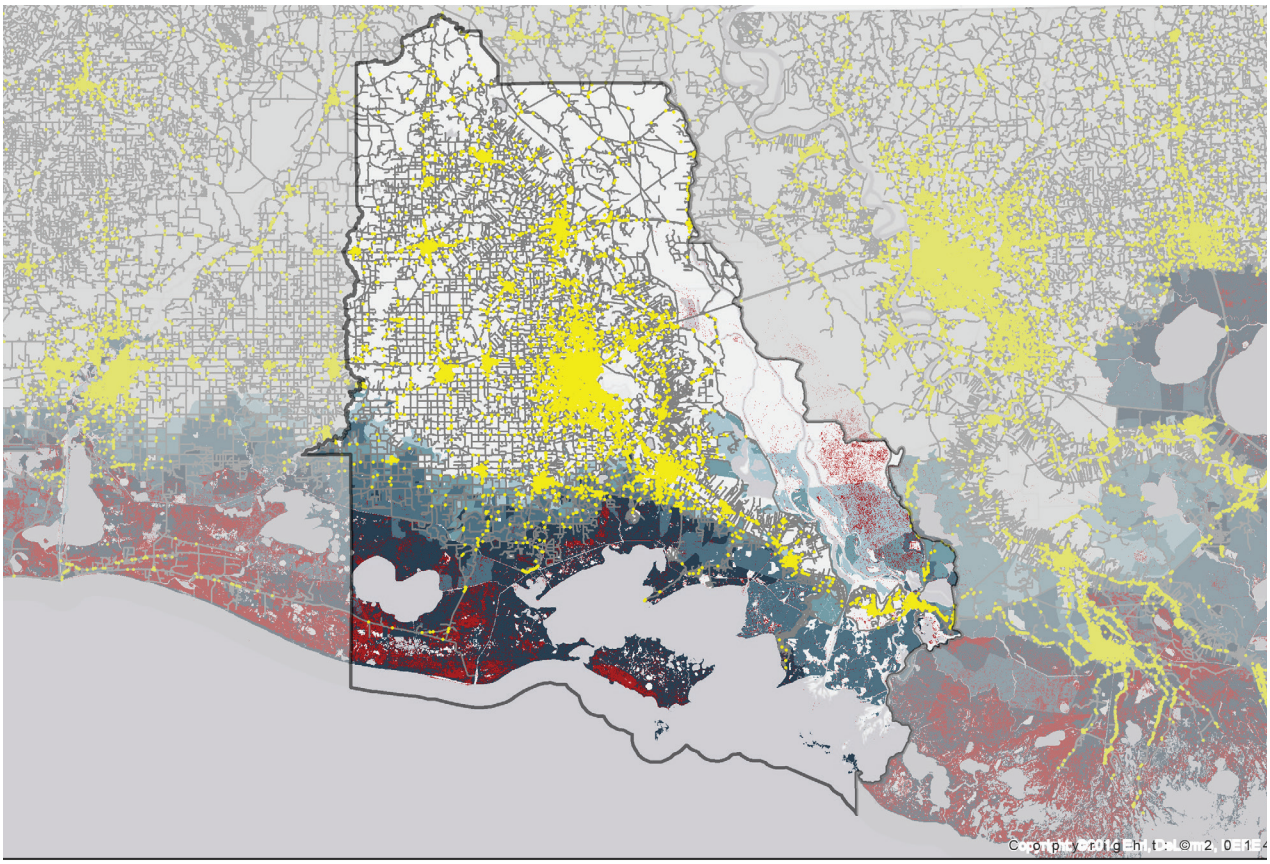

May key: yellow represents current location of businesses, red represents land loss in 50 years from 2012 less optimistic scenario, and blue represents flooding from a 100-year storm after the land loss shown in red.

This is valuable research that helps us all better appreciate the importance of Louisiana's land loss challenges as well as the opportunity to work together to solve them.

— **Jason El Koubi**
President and CEO, One Acadiana

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.

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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.
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Full report can be downloaded at the following site: **edf.org/LSU-report**