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## Coastal cities seek protections against superstorms



**View Photo Gallery** — Following Sandy's trail of devastation through N.Y. and N.J.: Nearly a week after Sandy slammed into the New Jersey coastline in an assault that killed more than 100 people in 10 states, gasoline shortages persisted across the region, though odd-even rationing got under way in northern New Jersey in an echo of the gas crisis of the 1970s. Nearly 1 million homes and businesses were still without power in New Jersey, and about 650,000 in New York City, its northern suburbs and Long Island.

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"People say it's too ambitious, it's too expensive, let's talk about it 50 years from now . . . when the sea-level rises two to three feet," he said. "Well, that's too late."

When the cleanup ends, Bowman said, Sandy will likely be forgotten like the hurricanes before it: "Unfortunately it's going to take a storm with a major loss of life. It's going to be like Europe, that big storm that drowned several thousand."

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The lights were back on Saturday in lower Manhattan, but joy over that contrasted with deepening resentment in the city's outer boroughs and suburbs over a continued lack of power and rickety gas shortages.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR | Building big isn't the only answer. As Sandy and other storms have made clear, the forces of nature are too powerful.

Arlington men drove a U-Haul full of donations to Sandy victims in N.J.

Stefanie Dazio NOV 8

Frank Murphy and Frank Fumich collected items from the community to take to the Garden State.

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He was referring to the 1953 North Sea storm that killed more than 2,000, mostly in England and the Netherlands. After that debacle, the Dutch set out to design and build the most ambitious storm-surge protection system in the world.

Spanning 400 miles, and costing \$40 billion over four decades of construction, the Delta Works has been called the eighth wonder of the world. The system of dams, dikes, gates, sluices and walls is designed to reduce the risk of flooding to once every 4,000 years.

Unlike politicians in the United States, "The Dutch in 1953 were like, 'Never again,' " said Dale Morris, a senior economist at the Dutch Embassy in Washington.

The Dutch have helped build storm protections all over the world, including in St. Petersburg, Russia, and in Venice. They assisted with the recent construction of New Orleans's \$14.5 billion system of levees, flood walls and gates designed to thwart the kind of catastrophic flooding Hurricane Katrina caused in 2005.

The Dutch experts have also worked with officials in New York and Galveston. And they have advised Norfolk on ways to drain storm water more efficiently and Miami on how to improve water management.

Some experts warn that while it's important to adopt protections against floods, efforts to hold off deluges will eventually fail if greenhouse gas emissions and global warming aren't curbed.

In building seawalls, we can raise defenses, but it's a losing proposition if we can't stop sea-level rise," said Michael Heimer, professor of geosciences and international affairs at Princeton University, who lost power in his lower Manhattan home when Sandy hit.

5. The 'stupid party'

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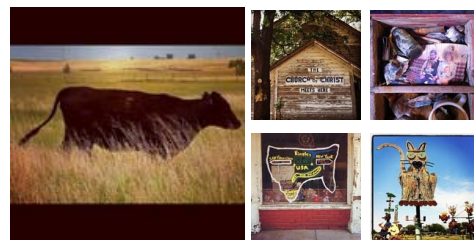


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Carolyn Hax

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