

# Exploring Social Vulnerability in a Changing Climate

## Initial Lessons from Los Angeles

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# USC Sea Grant – The Urban Ocean Program



- Fund research
- Community outreach & education
- Technical assistance to local/regional government

## 10 Million by the Sea...

- Water Quality
- HABs
- Sea Level Rise & Coastal Impacts
- Coastal Management
- Maritime Affairs

# This is L.A.



This is also L.A.



# Social Vulnerability in the Coastal Zone

“Despite persistent beliefs that living on the coast is reserved for the wealthy, there are large social disparities in coastal areas that vary regionally”

- National Climate Assessment

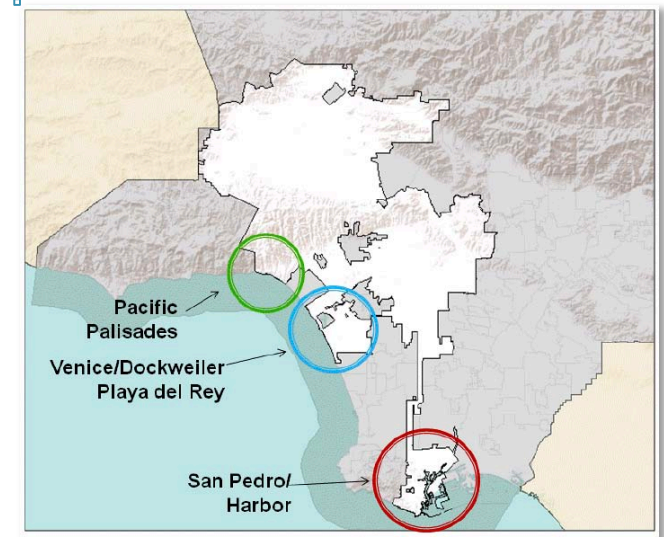
“In California, 18% of those exposed to high flood risk by 2100 also fall into more socially vulnerable categories”

- Pacific Institute, 2012

# City of L.A. Vulnerability Study

## Social Vulnerability Assessment

- Led by Dr. Julie Ekstrom and Dr. Susanne Moser
- Examined suite of census data
  - Income
  - Poverty
  - Education
  - Race
  - Age
  - Housing Type/Age
  - Physical/mental illnesses & disabilities
- Venice, low-lying San Pedro and Wilmington have the highest social vulnerability



# Initial Recommendations & Strategies

- Document vulnerable populations – helps first responders
- Alternative forms of communications
  - In other languages
  - Don't require computer access
- Empower neighborhood councils, churches and community-based organizations



# Reflecting on LA project

- Initial reaction from stakeholders
- Terminology and mapping concerns
- Ultimately, the Social Vulnerability results received the most focus



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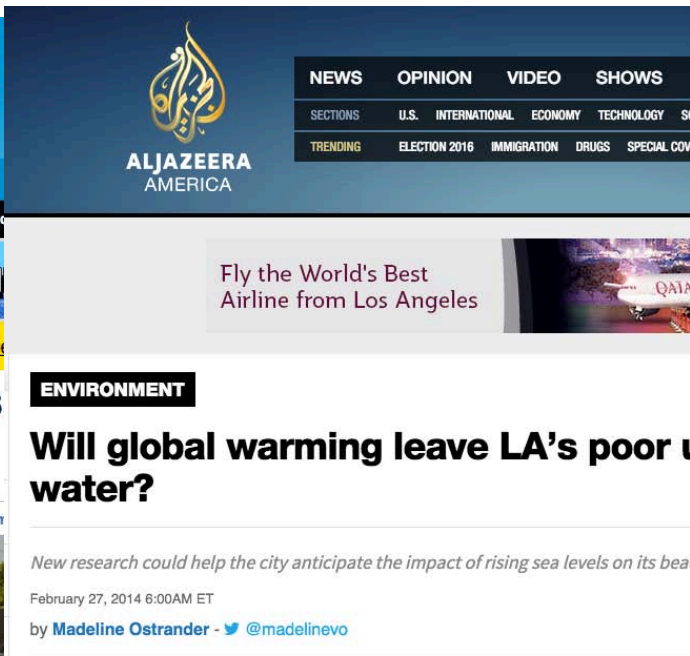
ATP 1000 BNP PARIBAS OPEN WTA #TENN

**DEVELOPING: 2 Charged In Double**

**Residents, Renters In S Sea Level**

January 8, 2014 11:55 AM

Filed Under: Abbott Kinney, Ballona Wetlands, Clir



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**ENVIRONMENT**

**Will global warming leave LA's poor u water?**

*New research could help the city anticipate the impact of rising sea levels on its beach*

February 27, 2014 6:00AM ET

by **Madeline Ostrander** - @madelinevo



Palos Verdes Patch Find Your Patch

Patch LocalStream Advertise With Us All Topics Community Corner

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**Report: Sea Level Rise to Affect Low-Lying Communities**

The USC study says low-income areas like San Pedro and Wilmington would be affected. Palos Verdes, CA

By NICOLE MOORADIAN (Patch Staff) - January 8, 2014 2:23 am ET

1. Boy Cor  
2. Rac Fra  
3. Pol Fat



# Engaging Vulnerable Communities: Venice Beach & Wilmington

- Discussed:
  - Risks associated with climate change
  - Ways communities can work together to adapt
  - Case studies & lessons learned
  - Community questions and discussion
- Simultaneous interpretation and all materials available in English and Spanish



# AdaptLA Capacity Building & Trainings: Social Vulnerability & Community Strengths

## Stakeholder Needs Survey

- Soc Vuln 2<sup>nd</sup> Top training request

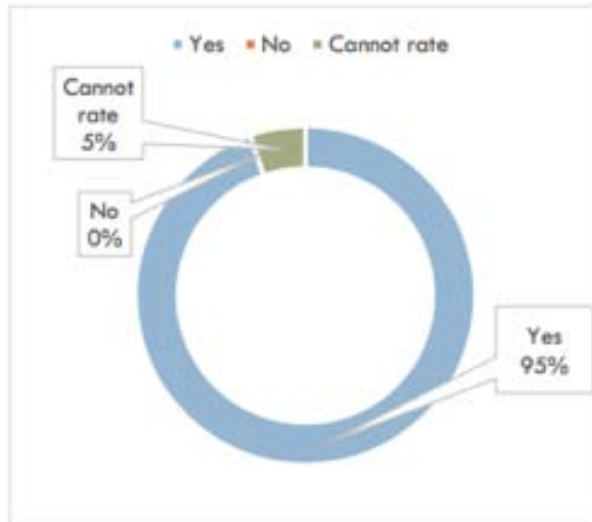
## Lecture & exercises

- How to use social vulnerability assessments
- Identify which populations are most susceptible and why
- Explore how community strengths/weaknesses can empower & engage public

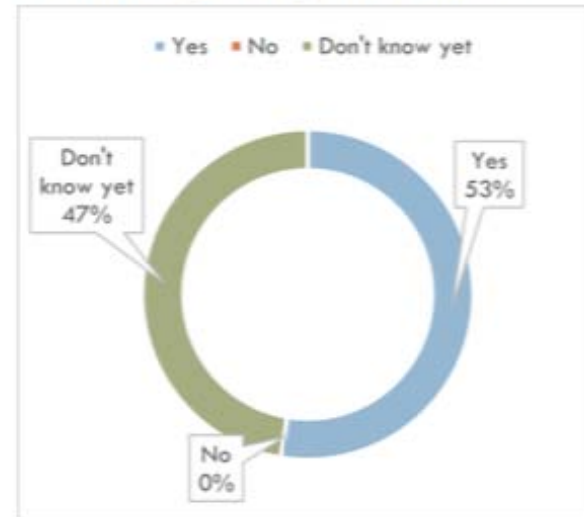


# Post Workshop Survey

1. Has your understanding of social vulnerability increased as a result of this training?



2. If yes, do you feel you have enough basic skills to use this knowledge in your work?



Comments from participants:

“Need Examples!”

“More time for community engagement/  
process”

“More detail on programs in existence”

# Stakeholder Engagement



Political Leaders  
City Councils  
Sustainability Depts  
Wastewater Treatment  
Emergency Managers  
Private Industry  
Consultants  
Public Utilities  
Public Works  
Harbor Depts  
Planning Depts  
Park Managers

NGOs  
Academia  
Educators  
State Agencies  
Federal Agencies  
MPOs, JPAs, COGs  
Museums, Aquariums  
Community Organizations  
Professional Associations  
Regional Organizations  
Neighborhood Councils  
Social Justice Organizations

# Community Engagement

- Policy change requires making difficult choices
  - Important to engage entire community from grassroots to elected officials
  - Explore the many different ways to communicate
- Disconnect between electoral cycles and long-term planning
  - Continuity rests with well-informed stakeholders

# What's Next?

Figure out how to do this in a community!



- Find local champions!
- Community Visioning
- Social vulnerability
- Resilience Workshops
- Community-based solutions and local projects