Is Hurricane Sandy Simply a Normality?
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Introduction
Global warming affects various natural phenomena, such as hurricanes. Recently, hurricanes have been increasingly destructive in nature and reaching farther north, and as a result are more expensive to recover from. One such example is Hurricane Sandy’s impact on NYC. Will stronger hurricanes hit NYC more frequently and increase costs of recovery? What are some strategies to combat this? Our project will aim to inform the public on infrastructure and funding in NYC and how it can help us prepare for future hurricanes.

Research Question
How can investment in infrastructure better prepare the city of New York against future disasters like Hurricane Sandy?

Background
- Global warming “refers to climate change that causes an increase in the average temperature of the lower atmosphere” (Kim et al., 2010).
- The U.S. is one of the leading contributors of emissions of greenhouse gases through cars and factories.
- Due to the continuous warming of the Earth, hurricanes once thought as predictable and thus manageable, are now erratic and disastrous.

The Politics of Global Warming
- Politicians are slowly pushing towards change, but not a drastic adjustment in the city’s infrastructure. (Tollefson, 2013)
- New York is a modern city, but it is regarded as an aging city. A large amount of its buildings are old and not up to standard code. These buildings are slowly being worn away which is causing them to fall apart. Only a select few areas have newly constructed buildings and some existing buildings have renovated interiors. If politicians allow this to continue, then the more fragile buildings in New York will be heavily damaged or even destroyed by powerful natural disasters.
- With changes in our infrastructure, the amount of money that will be saved can be used towards other aspects in our society.

Findings
- Sandy caused approximately $19 billion in public and private losses, as well as paralyzing the financial district, to make financial matters even worse (Tollefson, 2013).
- New York allocated around $15 billion in emergency aid. Of that, only $8 billion are being used for long term projects that will improve the city’s infrastructure.
- While this amount of money is being used to rebuild structures that have been damaged or destroyed, it should be invested towards improvement of the city’s infrastructure so that these kinds of damages won’t happen again.

The Economics of It
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Conclusion
Global warming has an enormous affect on natural disasters. If we look back at some of the natural disasters that hit New York, the most recent ones were more powerful. We cannot prevent these forces of nature from happening. However, we can reinforce what we currently have so that our city can withstand the next potential disaster. Politicians in our state must be willing to increase the amount of funding for infrastructure so that they can save themselves billions of dollars in damages, instead of paying that amount or higher because of future catastrophes.

Citations