

# **Despite increasing climate change threats, more Americans are relocating to storm zones**

**By Sean Roche**

Climate change being an existential threat, according to officials in Charleston South Carolina. They are developing a \$1.1 billion sea wall that would shield historic residences from hurricanes that are becoming more violent and have repeatedly endangered the burgeoning city. Additionally, Mayor John Tecklenburg stated in his state of the city address that Charleston must “rezone every inch of our city” to stop construction in flood-prone regions.

However, Charleston, which was battered by Hurricane Ian’s wind and rain on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, has approved plans for a more than 9,000 acre residential and commercial development that, according to environmental advocates, would place about half of its home in a flood plain. This is despite the city’s efforts to fortify itself. I feel like this in itself is an innovative idea, however as they are being placed in a flood plain it doesn’t seem like it would be the brightest idea.

The majority of recent immigrants, according to Joseph Von Nessen of the University of South Carolina, are from New England. The region’s lower cost of living, mild winters and other attractions draw a substantial number of retirees. Younger workers are also moving to the area to the area because of the newly created manufacturing jobs.

According to the research, at least for many, the benefits appear to easily outweigh the costs. “Severe weather events are certainly one cost, people are considering, but based on the data,” Von Nessen said. According to census estimates, the Southeast will experience the most population growth over the next 20 years, through 2040.

The average annual damage from hurricanes and tropical storms in the United States is anticipated by the Congressional Budget Office to be around \$54 billion back in 2019. The report stated that “storm-related costs are likely to rise in the future because of climate change and increases in development in risky areas.” Unless policy adjustments are made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the number of houses insured by flood insurance.

“It’s not our view that Charleston has to stop growing, we just need to be smarter about it,” DeScherer said. “It makes little sense to put another small city within the flood plain. Are we going to put a sea wall around that in a few years?”

In contrast to Charleston, Ireland never truly ever experiences a hurricane danger. Ophelia, a category three hurricane that made landfall in Ireland in October 2017, was the most recent hurricane to do so. However, I believe that Ireland doesn't need to build many sea walls, if any at all, as doing so would be a waste of money in a place where they are not actually required.

In Ireland, flooding is a natural and unavoidable aspect of life. They are typically the result of several different things, such as clogged or overburdened drainage ditches, coastal storms, overflowing riverbanks, etc.