

More must be done to prep for hurricanes in the future

"In 2009, a congressional advisory panel recommended that Congress invest in levees, create national levee programs and enact policies to increase awareness about the risks of flooding," John Flesher and Cain Burdeau explained in last Sunday's Daily News.

"But Congress has yet to adopt the group's report," they continued. "In the meantime, experts are warning that aging and weak flood-control systems will likely face stiffer tests as climate change makes severe storms more common in the coming years."

We need to heed these warnings.

According to Andrew Cuomo, the price tag for superstorm Sandy could reach \$50 billion.

And that was only one event; many more are no doubt on the horizon.

So how much would it cost to protect New York City from future hurricanes?

Jeroen Aerts, an expert with the Institute for Environmental Studies in Amsterdam, estimates that installing a surge-barrier system around lower Manhattan could cost \$10 billion to \$22 billion, depending on the particular design employed.

It can be done.

Movable seawalls such as the Thames Barrier in London have a proven track record. In service since 1982, the main steel gates span over 1,700 feet and rise five stories above sea level when deployed. The system effectively ended flooding along the Thames.

The cost of not taking action to protect our coastal areas will ultimately prove much higher than the expense associated with taking definitive steps to mitigate the inevitable.

Only the federal government is in a position to provide this protection; the private sector has neither the desire nor the resources to tackle such a monumental and expensive undertaking.

The United States needs to join the rest of the world in taking the long view. When it comes to preparing for predictable natural disasters, an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure.

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