

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
September 2, 2022

This Isn't the Water Cycle You Learned in Grade School

A city [under pressure](#)—except for its water pumps. Residents of Jackson, Mississippi, have been without potable water for almost a week now. It all started when heavy rains caused the Pearl River to swell to [35 feet](#), causing water problems in more ways than one. [Flash floods](#) caused a major pump in the area's municipal supply to fail. They were already under a boil advisory before this all happened. In a city where relations with state government are complicated at best, the events in Jackson are the [product of a historically underfunded city exacerbated by climate change and social inequities](#). Governor Reeves committed to working with local officials on long-term solutions. Hopefully he won't [veto](#) the next one.

Crisis in Jackson underscores [the need to update public drinking water infrastructure](#) across the country. In an era where ["once in a lifetime" natural disasters](#) seem to be measured in terms of a dragonfly's life expectancy, we need creative solutions. Our friends across the pond are [tinkling with one](#).

You Give HUD A Bad Name

Last week, members of the [Jean Charles Choctaw Nation](#) began moving into new homes as a six year effort to move the Tribe to safer ground still leaves [much to be desired](#). What could have been a monumental moment for the tribe and a victory in climate adaptation was [overshadowed by planning mishaps and rifts with government agencies](#), namely Louisiana's Office of Community Development. The "federally funded" resettlement money came from department of Housing and Urban Development's [Natural Disaster Resilience Competition](#). That's probably not a contest you dreamed of winning as a kid. And while [FEMA takes a new approach to tribal relations](#), those not federally recognized, such as the Isle de Jean Charles Tribe, may still miss out on critical funding and support.

The [final days on Isle de Jean Charles](#) highlighted major flaws in one of the first attempts at voluntary community resettlement. But when do you finally make the decision to leave home for good? From an outsider's perspective, flood risks and insurance prices might seem like cause enough to relocate. That's easier said than done. Take Houston, for example. Despite [Hurricane Harvey's devastation and increased flood risks in the area](#), residents aren't putting [Texas in the rearview mirror](#). Shared tragedy and recovery often brings communities closer together, making those ties harder to sever. The

The **Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy** is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and legal stewardship of water.

Coming Up:

[ABA SEER 30th Fall Conference](#); September 21- 24

[Louisiana Climate Initiatives Task Force Fall Meeting and Workshop](#); October 22

[Restore America's Estuaries, 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit](#); December 4-8; New Orleans

Water jobs:

[Coastal Resource Scientist](#); Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority; Baton Rouge, LA

[Water Quality Technician](#); Pontchartrain Conservancy; Metairie, LA

[Clinical Instructor Tulane Environmental Law Clinic](#); New Orleans, LA

[Associate Attorney, Senior Attorney, and Paralegal](#); Earthjustice; Multiple Locations

[Climate Risk Legal Fellow](#); Environmental Defense Fund; Boulder, CO

[Summer Associate 2023](#), Sher Edling LLP, San Francisco

[California Resources Control Water Board](#); Sacramento, CA

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hope remains that these communities, states, and federal agencies learn from the Isle de Jean Charles experience.*

Winter is Coming—But Not How You Might Expect

A [new study](#) found that melting “dead” ice off Greenland’s coast will result in almost a foot of global sea rise. Scientists are calling it zombie ice, which definitely doesn’t soothe the nerves. Neither does hearing the study’s authors call the 10-inch estimate a “[very conservative rock-bottom minimum](#).” For context, if all that ice were concentrated over the United States, we would be under 11 meters of water. While thankfully it won’t all be concentrated over the United States, [sea levels don’t rise equally all over the world](#) and places like the Eastern U.S. and Gulf Coast are already experiencing a rate almost twice as high as the global average. And as with many of the effects of climate change, sea level rise will disproportionately impact poorer countries who are less at fault for global emissions.

If you need an illustration of the inequal impacts of climate change, look no further than the [deadly flooding in Pakistan](#). Almost [one-third of the country is underwater](#). However, it’s not just monsoon season that’s to blame. Pakistan has more glaciers than any other country (except those at the poles). And extreme summer temperatures have increased melting.

In other news, in a time with the hottest summers, highest waters, and strongest storms, it’s always nice to be reminded that [breaking records doesn’t have to be a bad thing](#).

* Our Assistant Director, Christopher Dalbom, is a member of the Academic Advisory Committee formed by the Office of Community Development for the Isle de Jean Charles resettlement.