

# Rising Water Puts China's Third Largest City at Risk

China's commitment to green energy and its developing approach to climate change and environmental issues is great news for the world as a whole as it brings us closer to reducing global emissions. The problem is that in one major city on China's coast, large scale development and rising water levels have led to major problems and lives and industries there are now at great risk.



China has long been seen as a country that doesn't view environmental issues and climate change in the same way as other nations, but recent studies into the vulnerability of the nation have made officials take notice a little more.

According to The Third National Climate Change Assessment Report, the water levels around China are rising much faster than the global average, which therefore puts the country more at risk of flooding and major damage to coastal regions in the near future.

The low-lying land of China is vast and it is believed that as much as 85 million people reside in areas that are now at risk of rising water. There are great fears for cities that lie on the coast, especially if the situation worsens, and one of the cities being talked about the most is Guangzhou. Here the impact has been devastating and could get a lot worse.

Guangzhou is a massive metropolis in southern China and, with an estimated population of 12.5 million, it has become the third largest city in the whole country. While this growth should be great news for industry, economics and tourism, there is a massive problem hanging over the area, one that makes the future of Guangzhou a little uncertain.

Guangzhou's future relies on the Pearl River Delta in two vital ways. On the one hand, this area is the primary region for wealth and advancement in the city. On the other, this delta lies within just a meter of sea level, which means that the city is heavily exposed to the sea and rising water.

Researchers from the University of Southampton said that this important area is now incredibly vulnerable to flooding and climate change. The effects have already been seen, with flooding and severe weather causing havoc in recent years. Heavy rainfall in 2010 even resulted in deaths and \$85 million worth of damages. The fear is that things can only get worse.



Guangzhou was always in danger from climate change because of its location but also because of the pace of development in the area. As the largest city in South Central China, it is a focal point for expansion in all sorts of industries, in the creation of housing and in tourism.

The city has been built up at a remarkable rate to cope with the rise in the local population, and its visitors, and this has meant massive land-reclamation projects that have further weakened the structural integrity of the city.

At the time, this would have been seen as a progressive advancement but now, as the country becomes more aware of the dangers of climate change, there are real concerns about what will happen to Guangzhou. There are fears of water shortages, further structural damage from ongoing development, and disease. Cases of dengue and malaria in the area are rising. With all of this combined, the future of Guangzhou as a tourist destination and a desirable place to live looks uncertain.



China has begun looking into green energy and climate change in recent years, partially spurred on by the \$4.1 billion South-South Co-operation Fund on Climate Change and the deal with America that began in 2014. The nations are leading the way in the produce of wind and solar energy and are now seeing renewable sources as the way forward to lessen any future damage to the environment.

The problem is that the harm to Guangzhou and the surrounding area has already been done – the city lies too close to the sea level and ongoing development has made it vulnerable to rising water and saltwater damage. This means that not only has the impact been devastating so far, it could be seen for a long time to come as the real damage continues to be exposed.

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