

Flood pains

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OUR provincial government is to be commended for releasing a new map this week outlining areas of British Columbia that will become potential floodplains as ocean levels rise this century.

Particularly in the Metro Vancouver area, the results are startling. Virtually the entire City of Richmond, large swathes of Delta's farmland, the airport and a key sewage treatment facility may all be under water some time before our grandchildren start drawing a pension.

The North Shore isn't home and dry either, with several key industrial areas, port terminals and the footings of both bridges under threat.

This is important work, and municipalities would do well to go over this map closely when it comes to approving new developments. Our local governments in North and West Vancouver are already figuring out who's going to have waterfront property and who's just going to have water in the coming decades.

But while everyone from district councils to the province to insurance companies to the military all acknowledge the ice caps are melting and ocean levels inevitably rising, this Conservative federal government is taking the most deplorably irresponsible action: none.

British Columbia has taken expensive, unpopular steps to try to react to climate change. Ottawa is the only level of government with the authority to take steps to slow, perhaps even prevent it. Yet Prime Minister Stephen Harper continues to cower behind the apron strings of American policy, even when it's clear the Americans are focused purely on short-term catastrophes right now.

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