



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Protecting Communities from Sea Level Rise

Local Government Knows Best



Claim and Focus

A clear position on the issue is presented (“local government should decide how it will protect communities...”) and while the essay maintains focus, the claim could be more precise and evenly developed (How could the federal and local governments collaborate?).



Support and Evidence

The essay maintains an appropriate balance of original ideas and textual evidence, though most of the quoted evidence comes from Source 2. Logical reasoning is demonstrated and counterclaims are acknowledged (“some critics say the federal government is better at handling these issues”).



Organization

A purposeful introduction and conclusion support the progression of ideas and the essay has structural elements of a letter as per the task. Clear transitions (“As a result,” “For instance,” “On the other hand”) show the relationships between and among ideas.



Language

Language is mostly formal and some interesting word choices (“dedicated,” “devastated”) attend to the interests of the reader. The essay demonstrates a perspective and voice (“They know,” “They care,” “They are”) and sentence structures are appropriately varied.



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see “25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays” by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

Protecting Communities from Sea Level Rise



Notes

Local Government Knows Best

To the President,

The earth is getting warmer and the effects can be seen all over the planet. Most people have heard about the melting of the arctic ice caps because of climate change. This can be seen in the rise in sea levels all over the world. As a result, sea level rise is affecting the coastline of the United States, but it is affecting certain groups of people more than others. People of color and low-income communities have been directly impacted by sea level rise. Federal assistance has helped, but it doesn't always consider the needs of these communities. While the federal government should continue to help, local governments should decide how they will protect communities that face unequal impacts from sea level rise.

The people who live in a community know it best. They know the history of the town. They care about the people who live and work there. They are the most dedicated to the area's long-term success. For instance, Ellicott City in Maryland was devastated by flooding in 2016 and 2018. The local government took action to address this disaster while investing in the downtown community. They funded "a series of projects including adding retention ponds, digging a tunnel near Main Street to redirect water from the historic downtown" (Source 3). The local government saw the need to prevent water damage and flooding from the homes and businesses downtown and came up with a solution that worked for the neighborhood. This shows that local government can address issues of flooding due to sea level rise while protecting the people and businesses directly affected by it.

According to Source 2, "federal and state plans do not work well. They leave out the people who are affected the most. These people are often part of low-income communities and communities of color." The people who are most directly impacted by climate change should be involved in the decision-making process to address these issues. Local government is made up of people who live in the community and will put the needs of the neighborhood first. On the other hand, some critics say the federal government is better at handling these issues. A study was performed by the Center for Climate Integrity that stated that "building sea walls in all coastal U.S. cities will cost over \$400 billion" (Source 4). Local governments do not have access to that kind of money or resources. However, they know their communities best and should be in charge of the plans and decision-making.

In conclusion, the federal government should continue to help local governments address the problems of sea level rise, but the decision-making power must stay at the local level. Local government should decide how to protect communities that face unequal impacts from sea level rise.