

There was a surprise question about climate change at the last Republican debate. What was surprising wasn't the question itself. Instead, it was the source of the question: Tomás Regalado, the Republican mayor of Miami. It turns out that this wasn't a fluke.

Regalado and the Republican mayor of Miami Beach have spoken out in an [op. ed.](#) about climate change:

"The overwhelming scientific consensus is that the rising sea levels are caused by the planet warming, that the burning of fossil fuels is driving this warming, and that we need to act quickly to avoid the worst impacts ahead.

These are the facts. We shouldn't waste time debating them."

Or consider [this](#), from a Republican Congressman:

"Rising sea levels and the erosion of our coastal communities have made it abundantly clear that South Florida is at the frontline of climate change. . . . If we want to diminish the impact that greenhouse gases will continually have on our planet over the next century, the effort to constrain carbon emissions must be expanded."

These politicians are responding not only to climate realities but to political ones. According to a University of Texas [survey](#), 81% of Floridians believe that climate change is happening now. That's even harder for a politician to ignore than the rising oceans.

Floridians have a good reason to be worried. A [report](#) issued jointly by Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach Counties says that sea levels along the South Coast could rise by as much as six feet by 2100 unless carbon emissions are contained. That's about the height of Miami above sea level. Much of South Florida is only three feet above sea level.

And even today, there are increasing problems of salt water intrusion and flooding. It's heartening to see that Republicans in the Sunshine State are no longer trying to bury their heads in state's ample array of sand beaches. Maybe this is the start of a national trend.