

Opinion

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Wish for Goodman is knowledge of science

On Christmas Eve the Sun-News published Peter Goodman's "Wish List for some in the Community," including this wish for me, "For Bob Endlich, a poster-sized enlargement of the photograph I saw this morning of a flooded mosque in Jakarta that used to be some distance from the sea." This was Peter's barb at me; Peter's flooded mosque in Jakarta was proof to him of acceleration of sea level rise caused by our use of fossil fuels.

Peter's supposed joke on me is instead a joke on Peter Goodman himself, because Jakarta is literally the poster child for... land subsidence caused by excessive groundwater pumping. If the reader enters "Economist Why Cities Sink" into Google's search engine, an article by the Economist returns, with a prominent picture of Jakarta flooding caused by, you guessed it, people indiscriminately pumping fresh water from sediments below the city. With groundwater pumping, mass is removed, unconsolidated sediments collapse, rarely to expand to their previous thickness. For cities next to the ocean, ground subsidence below sea level often occurs. Groundwater pumping is also responsible for land subsidence in Miami, Miami Beach, Norfolk, Virginia, and many other areas.

The main problem is groundwater pumping; a partial cure is groundwater recharging.

In the US and island locations in the Atlantic and Pacific there are dozens of tide gages; all tell the same story: the rate of sea level rise is the same today as it was when James Buchanan was president in the 1850s.

Houston and Dean, in May 2011's *Journal of Coastal Research* also conclude there's no recent acceleration in the rate of sea level rise.

Peter Goodman makes this same mistake repeatedly; my New Year's wishes for him are earth science knowledge and critical thought capabilities.

*Robert W Endlich
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