Supplemental Material

*Undercurrents*—Climate Monologues

**CATHERINE (Climate Scientist)**

1. OK. I’m just going to say it: We need a super storm to hit this area. We need a wake-up call.

2. Now, let me be clear. I don’t love that I said that. I don’t like wishing ill on others. I'm a scientist and I’m a pragmatist, but I have a heart.

3. We’re at a crucial moment. We need to ratchet up everyone’s urgency around this topic of coastal adaptation and managed retreat. Also, I’m Catherine.

4. We are getting to a tipping point on this issue of coastal adaptation. We need to start having bigger conversations about resilience, as well as (and I know some people don’t like this phrase) managed retreat. We’re dealing with some municipal bodies and a citizenry that is not oriented in the right direction.

5. We have been trying to establish relationships with community leaders. There is so much bureaucracy involved. You never quite feel like you’re talking *to* people. You’re sort of talking to a system. The system doesn’t really give you feedback in real time. And the system can be intimidating. For everyone. Occasionally, I’ll go out on a conservation project and actually get to speak one on one with residents or even municipal leaders. That can be encouraging. But I can’t have individual conversations with everyone in this region, now can I?

6. I’m interested in this work and I’m passionate about this topic. I want to help be a catalyst for change in this region, in this community. So I get enthusiastic about this. I’ve had a few city councilors tell me privately that I may be coming on too strong or aggressively with my approach. I’m not sure how I feel about that. I’ve done all the research. It’s here. Why won’t you take advantage of it?

7. Look, I get it. The town is scared. There’s no easy political course for them here, so how do they think about a long term issue like this? Some people are less ready to talk about these things than others; especially the higher up you go in leadership. There’s more at stake the higher up you go. When does this factual, scientific issue become a political one? And what do we, as experts, do at that level? I guess it’s not our call when we get to that point. Which is too bad!

8. And property owners are crippled by inertia. So they’re not preparing for the worst. They are uncertain about what the best move for them to make is, or they just don’t see the point in a lot of this. People think these storm surges and fires like out in California are once in a lifetime events. They aren’t. They will happen again. And again. And again.

9. Plus there is this ethical dilemma that a lot of people face. Selling my house: is it the right thing to do? How can I, in good conscience, sell this property knowing that the next owners are purchasing a ticking time bomb?

10. It doesn’t seem like everyone’s on the same page. Even within the scientific community. Please don’t tell my colleagues I said that.

11. A lot of my colleagues are talking about 50 year plans, 75 - 100 year plans. I want to talk about actionable items now. Things we can do in 6… 5… 2 years! There are a lot of ideas, but sometimes it kind of stops there. That’s not a terribly popular opinion.

12. And this is the trillion dollar question, right? What are they going to do?

**SUSAN (Municipal Leader)**

1. My name is Susan. I’ve been involved with the town for - gosh – 30 years now? I started as a planner and have been fortunate enough to serve as a municipal leader and city councilor for a majority of that time, off and on. Every time I say “I can’t do this anymore”, I come back. I love the service aspect of the work.

2. I like to think I know our constituents pretty well. You know, it’s funny. We’re definitely a city. Especially for this small state. But we’re a community first. At least that’s how I think about it. It’s growing, though. And quickly.

3. Yes, I have heard that term – ‘managed retreat’. Frankly, I don’t like it. It feels authoritarian to me. This issue is coming up more and more over the last few years, although when we speak to climate scientists about it they package it a little more warmly. I’ve heard ‘coastal resilience’ a lot lately. I don’t mind that. I think we are a very resilient community!

4. I understand that this is an important topic. I do. And I want to see the conversation happen because I want the best for the people who live here. But, there is just *so much* information to take in and consider. It’s vast and it’s overwhelming. And frustrating, too. You know, I trust the science folks who are bringing this to us. I see how much they care and how crucial this issue is to them. But, I do feel like I’m being talked down to sometimes. A lot of us do.

5. The way a lot of us see it: just because it’s good information to you, doesn’t mean it’s good information to me. What good is this information if we don’t know what to do with it? You can’t just drop a document on my desk and then get frustrated when I don’t do the ‘right thing’. I think a lot of these more academic types are driven first by getting their grant dollars. Sure, they care, but they have research the want to do, too. And articles they want to publish. But, believe me, nobody in this town who is engaged on this issue is reading those articles. Please don’t tell them I said that.

6. We’re just a little out of sync. We’re not speaking the same language all the time. I guess, what would be helpful for us, is if we had our hands held a bit, you know? We want a plan. We can’t use your information without a plan. There’s a disconnect because it can all feel so vague. We need help implementing this. It’s not really their job to decide what’s best for people. This is a conversation and a long term relationship that needs to be developed. It’s OK if your urgency is different than ours.

7. I think we’ve just embraced the fact that this is going to be an on-going conversation for years and years and years. We could get into the economics of it and the potential loss of our tax base over time, but I’d like to get some sleep tonight.

8. It can be tricky. There’s a lot of trust that needs to be built. And the faces keep changing. We’re working towards building long-term trust with our residents, our technical assistance providers, and all stakeholders. There are a lot of different perspectives that need to be represented. There are a lot of different values and vocabularies at play here. I don’t know how we’re going to make everyone happy.

9. I’ve got a lot on my plate as it is. This is a huge issue. And likely wont get solved until long after I’m gone. I mean, what do you want me to do?

**JIM (Coastal Property Owner)**

1. My name is James. My family, friends, and everyone in the neighborhood calls me Jimmy and that’s what I go by.

2. Yes, I’m a coastal resident but my property is two blocks from the beach. It’s on the marsh side of downtown, and we call it our special view. It’s been our summer haven for 35 years. It’s our pride and joy.

3. I wouldn’t trade it for anything in the world.

4. So I spend October through late March over in Pinewood and then we get out here and open up the house as soon as it’s warm enough to crack the windows without bursting the pipes. Been doing that, like I said, a good 35 years now. Don’t see any sense in stopping that at this point. Although, things are changing. It seems like every time we come back there’s something new on the strip: big houses or condos or new stores. Makes you wonder who’s buying all these up. And why the town’s letting them build. Especially with all the flooding we been getting. I don’t know. Beats me.

5. ‘Managed retreat’? No I’m not familiar with that term. Is that a war term? I’m not sure what that has to do with my property. Why do I feel nervous all of a sudden?

6. Oh, I get it. It’s a climate change thing. They were talking about that at the last town hall meeting I went to. Some folks were getting really kind of uppity about it. One lady started yelling. I get it, though. It’s a pain for some people to have to move their cars every tide. I’m grateful I don’t have to do that. That would be a pain in the ass, but when you have that kind of money it’s worth it for the view on that side of town, I’m sure. We do get flooding down in this neighborhood on occasion, but we put the house up on some blocks about 20 years ago, so never had to worry about much property damage. I can’t even make it to a lot of planning meetings since I’m gone so much of the year. So I’m not too looped in. I always just done what works for me.

7. Sure, I’d like to see the town do something about the flooding issue. I pay taxes – use ‘em! Well, let me back up. I’d like to see them do something if it’s not infringing on my rights or my property. Like, for example, why are they telling me that the crushed rocks in my driveway are suddenly not porous any more? See, they approve one thing and then they change their mind. How am I gonna trust them to make the right decision for me?

8. So when they say ‘managed retreat’, they mean forcing us out? Well, I’m not a retreater. I’m a fighter. I don’t think it’ll be that bad.

9. Look, people want to keep their property. It’s that simple. A lot of people ask me if I think I’d be able to sell. I’ve thought about it, but this place is so special. I want to see my great grandkids use it. But if I wanted to sell, I could and I would. And then people say “Hey, Jimmy, why would someone buy a property that floods? And is gonna flood more?” And my thinking is “who says I got to tell them how much it floods?” That’s not my problem. Once the sale’s done I don’t care. If they buy in this neighborhood and they got a problem they can figure it out themselves or take it up with the town. Ha, good luck with that, though.

10. I guess I never gave too much bother to the weather. I mean, I hear hurricane Sandy was bad, but they bounced back right? I just roll with things and respond to whatever Mother Nature wants to bring. We’ll be ok. We always have been. It’s our happy place. It’s blessed. If I wake up drowning in my home one morning, so be it. It was a good run. What are you gonna do?