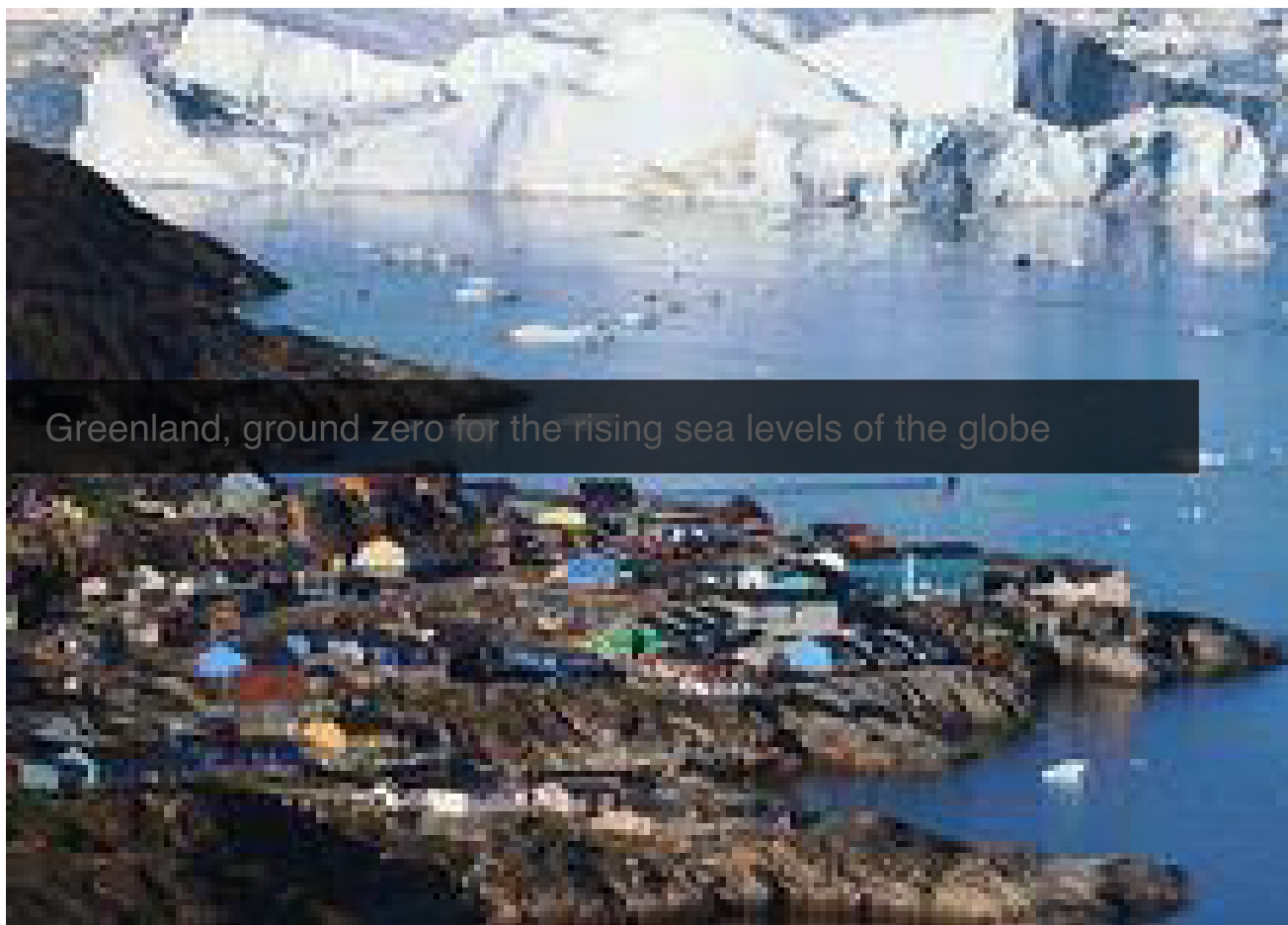


Congressman thinks the seas are rising because of rocks. He's wrong.

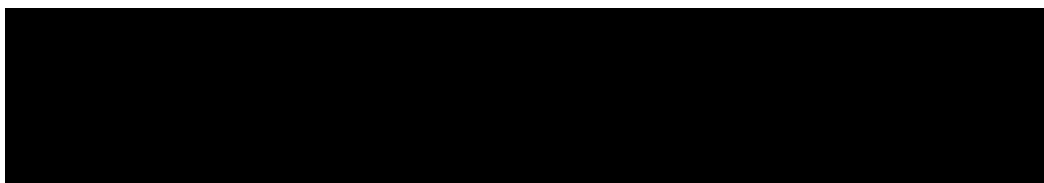


Greenland, ground zero for the rising sea levels of the globe

*IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES*

GOP Representative Mo Brooks, who represents Alabama's 5th district, [was questioning Philip Duffy](#), president of the Woods Hole Research Center in Massachusetts during a House Science, Space and Technology Committee hearing this week when he wondered if observed changes in sea levels was somehow caused by rocks and eroding soil and not human-caused climate change.

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"What about erosion?" Brooks asked.

"Every single year that we're on Earth, you have huge tons of silt deposited by the Mississippi River, by the Amazon River, by the Nile... and every time you have that soil or rock or whatever it is that is deposited into the seas, that forces the sea levels to rise, because now you've got less space in those oceans, because the bottom is moving up."

Duffy was nonplussed, answering, "I'm pretty sure that on human timescales, those are minuscule effects."

And the scientific consensus sides with Duffy.

Sophie Nowicki, a Research Scientist and Deputy Chief for the Cryospheric Sciences Laboratory at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, said via email that Brooks doesn't have it right when it comes to his theories on erosion and sea level rise.

"There is an element of land movement and subsidence [affecting local sea level](#)," she said. "But the [dominant drivers of sea level](#) change come from different sources."

One of those big sources of the increasing sea levels is [the accelerated melting](#) of the Greenland Ice Sheet.

Brooks wasn't the only GOP lawmaker to express such skepticism over climate change. But at least he seems to acknowledge that sea levels are rising, even if his theory doesn't hold water on a global level.

[Over at the Washington Post](#), Philip Bump did a little math to see roughly how much soil would have to be deposited in our oceans to account for the [annual 3.3 millimeter rise in sea levels](#). His conclusion: you'd need to drop a big ball of dirt roughly 8 miles in diameter into the oceans every year. And that ain't happening.

As to Brooks' claims, though, Colin Polsky, professor and Director of the Center for Environmental Studies at Florida Atlantic University, said that, "the burden of proof is on the Congressman to persuade us that his idea is superior to the explanation already provided and scientifically vetted by NASA and NOAA."

So far, Brooks hasn't publicly provided that proof, but we've reached out to the congressman's office just in case.

One final note on Brooks: his district includes Huntsville, Alabama which is home to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. So, if he intends to disagree with NASA's findings, at least he doesn't have to go far.

**WATCH: We could see a decline in King Penguins thanks to — you guessed it — climate change**

