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Even a small cut in global warming will help slow sea level rise

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When it comes to avoiding dangerous rises in sea level, every little bit of global warming we

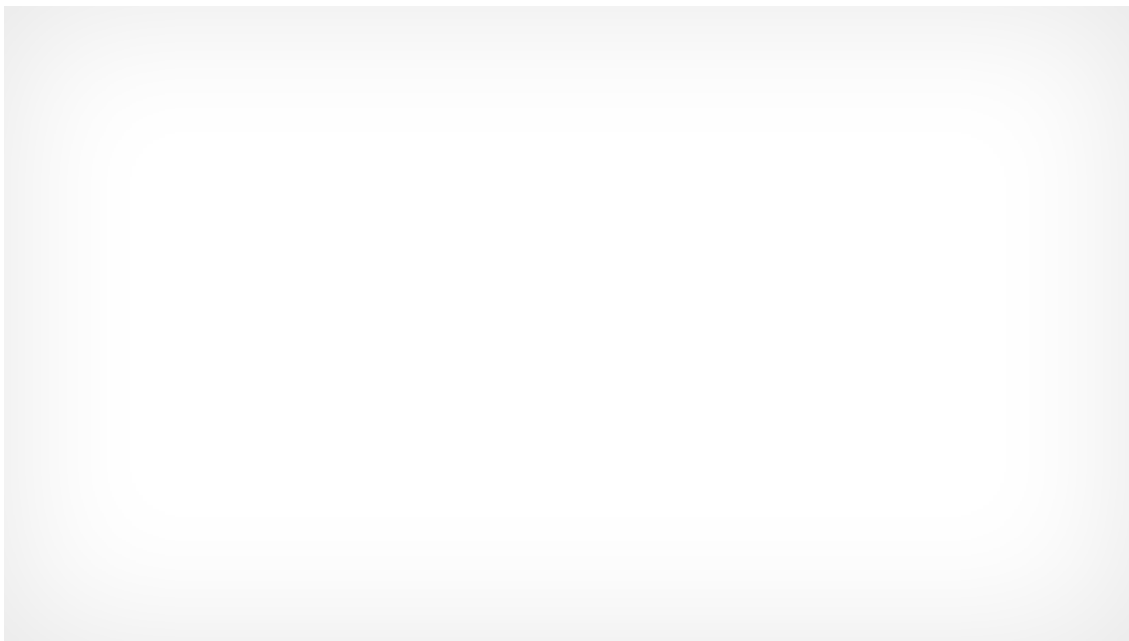
can avoid will make a difference.

In Paris in December 2015, world leaders agreed to try to limit warming to 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and if possible keep it within 1.5 °C.

While a 2 °C limit would be easier politically, it turns out that sticking to 1.5 °C makes quite a difference when it comes to [sea level rise](#).

[Klaus Bitterman](#) of Tufts University in Massachusetts and his colleagues simulated sea level rise under different amounts of warming. They found that stabilising temperatures at 1.5°C would lead to seas rising less, and more slowly, than allowing temperatures to reach 2°C. By 2150 – just over a century from now – sea levels would be as much as 17cm lower for a temperature rise of 1.5°C, compared to 2°C. That means fewer [coastal communities destroyed](#).

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Even if we “overshoot” and reach 2°C, there’s still an opportunity to minimise the impact. Bringing temperatures back down to 1.5°C would mean 12cm less sea level rise than if we stayed at 2°C.

That’s in line with a 2016 study by [Carl-Friedrich Schleussner](#) of Climate Analytics in Germany. He also found that limiting warming to 1.5°C led to [significantly less sea level rise](#).

“Sea level rise will continue for many centuries, but it will happen more slowly if we limit warming,” says Schleussner.

Journal reference: *Environmental Research Letters*, DOI: [10.1088/1748-9326/aa9def](https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aa9def)

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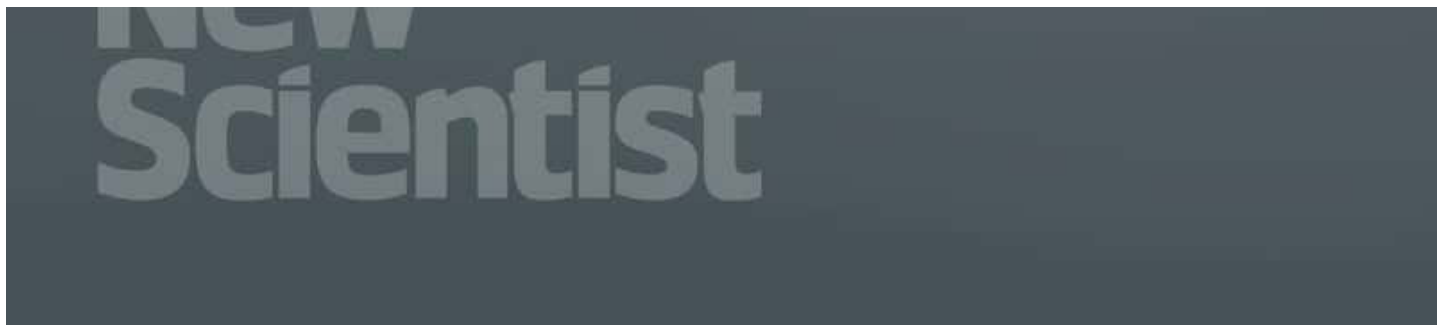
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