Nearly all of Alaska’s glaciers, currently covering about 25,000 square miles, are beating a hasty retreat amid a warming climate. Scientists predict global sea levels could rise by as much as two feet by the end of this century, largely as a result of the planet’s melting glaciers and ice sheets, and expansion as the oceans absorb heat. By some estimates, Alaska glaciers have been responsible for about nine percent of the sea level rise experienced during the twentieth century. The reduction of Alaska’s mountain and tidewater glaciers, together with the reduction of sea ice, has lessened the ability of the planet to reflect the sun’s energy back into space. The additional fresh water has decreased the salinity of the oceans. In one Southeast Alaska study, scientists say glacial retreat has caused the land beneath to spring upward, something scientists theorize may increase the likelihood of earthquakes as the region’s tectonic plates begin to flex.