

UC SANTA BARBARA

The 2035 Initiative

Call for Research Proposals: The Political Economy of the Inflation Reduction Act Workshop, hosted by *The 2035 Initiative* at UC Santa Barbara

The American energy system is at a crossroads, with a massive influx of clean energy investments poised to transform the American economy over the coming decade. However, the success of recent climate and energy policy legislative packages will depend on the politics of implementation, including whether current policies restructure the political economy of energy and climate reforms in the United States.

The 2035 Initiative at the University of California Santa Barbara is seeking proposals for research on the political economy of the Infrastructure Reduction Act and/or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. We see an urgent need for research that examines the efficacy, durability and equity of these legislative efforts, and the political mobilizations, coalition-building, and policymaking processes that will shape their success over time. Specifically, we want to bring together scholars doing research and analysis that sheds new light on the provisions and likely effects of these laws; the political processes that will shape their future direction and effectiveness; and their normative implications. Topics of interest include:

The provisions and effects of the IRA and IIJA.

What are the key performance indicators that will enable us to ascertain whether the IRA and IIJA are reshaping the political economy of climate and energy reforms? What do we know about the capabilities and biases of existing agencies to which tasks will be assigned? How will public benefits from the package be received, and to what effect? Which states and localities will benefit from the package? Which sectors, among both capital and labor, will benefit? What are the effects of the package on intra-industry dynamics, such as policy take-up by large, investor-owned firms versus small, privately-held firms? What strategies for community engagement are necessary to fully deliver IRA benefits for renewable energy development that will depend, in part, on local buy-in? What support for communities and workers, including compensation and local

economic development, are still necessary to facilitate the energy transition in different parts of the country?

The subsequent politics of climate change in the United States.

How will the IRA and IIJA affect subsequent legislative efforts on climate and energy in the United States? How will the IRA and IIJA shape energy policymaking at state and local scales? How will the package affect federal and local bureaucratic regulatory autonomy and the ability of agencies like the EPA, SEC, and CARB to regulate industry? Will new climate-energy interest groups be formed and if so, how will they position themselves? What aspects of these bills are likely to be durable? And what can be done to increase the political and partisan durability of bill provisions?

Equitable implementation of the IRA/IIJA

Will climate action further disadvantage relatively poor and underserved communities, as communities with more affluent and influential populations take better advantage of new opportunities? Under what conditions could such a tendency be countered by public policy? What leverage points exist to ensure that the energy transition proceeds equitably within the context of the IRA/IIJA? To whom should the policy-makers be held accountable, through what mechanisms, and with what degree of publicity?

We are hosting a two-part workshop series at UC Santa Barbara. In Spring 2023, we will host a first workshop where participants will present research plans or preliminary results. A follow-up workshop in Fall 2023 will bring the group back together to share final results.

Accommodation and workshop expenses will be covered, along with travel expenses on an as-needed basis. Some seed research funding may also be available for workshop participants with need. We are open to proposals from any social science discipline that address the political economy of the Inflation Reduction Act and/or the Infrastructure/Investment and Jobs Act.

Proposals to participate in the workshop should be sent by December 16th, 2022 to Daniela Schulman, danielaschulman@ucsb.edu. Proposals should be no longer than one page. They should outline the proposed research question related to the political economy of either the IRA or IIJA and a tentative research plan to answer this question. We will notify workshop participants by early January 2023.

If you have any questions about the workshop or proposals before then, please reach out to Matto Mildenerger, mildenerger@ucsb.edu.

The 2035 Initiative at UC Santa Barbara is a collaboration between environmental policy and politics research labs at the University of California Santa Barbara. We use cutting-edge empirical research, policy development, and media engagement to support transformational policy change in the United States and across the planet. Learn more about [what we do](#) and [who we are](#).