ABSTRACT

The United States is in the midst of a massive energy transition that will generate important societal benefits including new innovations and improved environmental conditions. This transition, however, may also have serious implications for vulnerable populations. The transition may exacerbate income inequality, disrupt labor markets, perpetuate energy poverty, and reduce government revenue critical to funding the social safety net. Our ability to manage the energy transition in a way that takes vulnerable communities into account is immensely important to the stability of our political, economic, and social institutions. In this presentation, Dr. Konisky will discuss the distribution of benefits and burdens related to the US energy transition, such as access to low-carbon energy technologies and unemployment in legacy energy industries. He will also highlight findings from his ongoing research, including insights into how vulnerable populations are adapting to the energy transition, and what opportunities they envision for themselves. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of advancing an action-oriented research agenda focused on the just transition.

BIO

David Konisky specializes in environmental politics and policy, regulation, federalism, environmental justice, and public opinion. His research has been published widely in political science and public policy journals. He is the author or editor of three books, including most recently Failed Promises: Evaluating the Federal Government’s Response to Environmental Justice (MIT Press, 2015) and Cheap and Clean: How Americans Think about Energy in the Age of Global Warming (MIT Press, 2014, with Steve Ansolabehere). Konisky earned his PhD in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and holds master’s degrees in environmental management and international relations from Yale University.