EMRG Welcomes Postdoctoral Fellow

Nichole Dusyk has joined EMRG as a postdoctoral fellow. Nichole’s research interests include energy policy and governance, participatory politics, sustainability, and the interaction of technology and society. Her PhD, completed in April 2013, examined the trajectory and discourse of BC’s clean energy policy and investigated how local engagement in two BC communities, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, has influenced renewable energy development. The analysis included municipal energy initiatives in both communities as well as the proposed Site C Hydroelectric Project and the Bear Mountain Wind Park. Her findings illuminate the contribution that local and participatory politics could make in transforming BC’s energy system but also highlight how the technologies in question mediate participatory processes and how the political, institutional and historical context are all critical in determining how participatory processes unfold.

Her background includes a BSc in Electrical Engineering (University of Alberta), an MS in Science and Technology Studies (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), and a PhD in Resource Management and Environmental Studies (University of British Columbia). She has also spent time working as a Science and Technology Policy Analyst for Environment Canada.

While at EMRG, Nichole will be working with Dr. Jonn Axsen on a project investigating public opinion, media coverage, and policy discourse surrounding unconventional fossil fuel developments. She will also lend her expertise in qualitative methods and institutional and policy analysis to Jonn’s on-going projects on smart-grids and plug-in electric vehicles.

She is excited to contribute to the dynamic research underway at EMRG and looks forward to participating in the REM community. She welcomes conversation with faculty and students and is especially pleased to share insight and strategies for navigating an interdisciplinary graduate degree.

Outside of work, Nichole enjoys running, cycling, and international travel although these days she is more likely to be found in a local park running around and exploring with her two young sons.

Dr. Jonn Axsen presented three papers at the biannual ISEE conference hosted by the University of Iceland. The papers were titled 1) Citizen acceptance of new fossil fuel infrastructure: Value theory and Canada’s Northern Gateway Pipeline; 2) Transitioning to sustainable lifestyle practices in Canada; and 3) Socio-technical transitions to low-carbon consumption: Developing markets for electric mobility. Dr. Axsen gave additional talks at New Energy Iceland and the University Center of Westfjords.

The King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center Workshop, September 16th, 2014

Dr. Axsen presented at a one-day workshop organized by the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) in Paris, France. The workshop, entitled The Drivers of Transportation: Measuring the Impact of Policy on Adoption of Alternative Fuel Vehicles on a Global Scale was designed to focus on analysis of consumer profiles, market share penetration rates, and attitudinal data to improve the understanding of the effectiveness of initiatives and policies. Dr. Axsen presented his work alongside Dan Sperling of UC Davis in the main session on alternative fuels policy.

Le Centre International de Recherche sur l’Environnement et le Développement, September 17th, 2014

Dr. Axsen visited le Centre International de Recherche sur l’Environnement et le Développement (CIRED) where he presented his work in energy-economy modelling. He presented a hybrid modelling technique which represents the long-run technology and preference dynamics induced by different climate policies during the process of technology adoption.

Dr. Mark Jaccard in the Vancouver Sun and Globe and Mail

Dr. Mark Jaccard’s latest op-eds are available online. The Vancouver Sun piece is titled Is BC’s LNG another Pipe Dream? and the Globe & Mail piece is titled Canadians Deserve Honest Climate Talk.

New study finds well-informed citizen support might not be required for climate policy implementation

By: Ekaterina Rhodes

Ekaterina Rhodes, Ph.D. candidate, Jonn Axsen, and Mark Jaccard produced a new study "Does effective climate policy require well-informed citizen support?" that was accepted for publication in the Global Environmental Change journal. The study is the first to empirically assess citizen knowledge of climate policies and its relationship to policy support, using survey data collected from a representative sample of citizens of British Columbia (n = 475). The paper finds that most citizens are not aware of any of British Columbia’s climate policies and have little understanding of the potential effect of these on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Once they are made aware of different types of climate policies, respondents are more likely to express support for regulations, such as the zero-emissions electricity standard and energy efficiency regulations, and less likely to support a carbon tax, suggesting that regulations might have higher chances of political acceptability than carbon taxation, at least in some jurisdictions. Statistical analysis indicates that citizen knowledge of climate policy is not associated with higher policy support. Furthermore, providing information on anticipated policy effectiveness to citizens does not translate into higher support, implying that efforts at informing citizens about climate science and policy are unlikely to be adequate for achieving implementation of effective climate policies.

Those seeking such a policy outcome need to be aware of other factors in the policy-making process, including the trust citizens have in key individuals, groups, and institutions who are promoting and implementing climate policies.
Todd Brunner

Todd completed his undergraduate degree in Environmental Science at the University of Calgary and comes to EMRG after four years of work as an environmental consultant in Alberta’s oil and gas industry. As a consultant, Todd gained experience conducting soil and groundwater assessment, remediation, and biophysical surveys for developed and undeveloped industrial sites. As challenging and rewarding as Todd’s professional experience was, he felt the need to pursue a Masters degree at SFU in the hopes of further developing his knowledge and practice of environmental management. More specifically, Todd is interested in researching sustainable energy systems, climate change issues and evaluating public perception and interest in sustainable practices. In his spare time, Todd enjoys travelling, hiking, ski touring, river kayaking, and exploring the abundance of outdoor adventure offered in the lower mainland.

Mikela Hein

Mikela comes to the REM program from Nanaimo BC. She graduated from Vancouver Island University where she focused her studies on Biology and Economics. She is excited to join REM and thinks it will be a great opportunity to integrate her knowledge about the environment with applied skills. Specifically, she joins the Energy and Materials Research Group where she hopes to focus on carbon emission policies. In her spare time Mikela likes to hike, read, and cook.

Tiffany Vass

Tiffany grew up in Regina, SK, and completed a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and International Development Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS. She took a particular interest in climate change and energy issues, and completed her honours thesis on community perceptions of small-scale wind energy projects in Nova Scotia. Through co-op work terms and internships, she has worked with the Sustainable Development Policy Division of Environment Canada in Ottawa, and at two energy efficiency companies in Halifax. Tiffany is excited to have the opportunity to join EMRG, where she hopes to learn more about how economics and public policy can be used effectively to move society towards a more sustainable energy system. She is also excited to be living on the west coast and to have the chance to explore BC! In her free time, Tiffany enjoys cycling, running, hiking, camping, and playing the piano.
New EMRG Graduate Students

Brett Zuehlke

Brett grew up in Vancouver and completed his Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science at Simon Fraser University and Advanced Diploma in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) from BCIT. More recently, Brett has worked on Community Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Plans and in the forestry consulting industry as a GIS analyst. Brett is excited to leverage his education and experience in REM and is looking forward to working with Dr. Mark Jaccard and collaborating with everyone at EMRG.

EMRG at the Transportation Research Board Annual Conference

Five EMRG papers were recently submitted for this annual conference organized by the US National Academy of Sciences.


2) Amy Miele, Joseph Bailey, & Jonn Axsen—Is awareness of public charging associated with consumer interest in plug-in electric vehicles?

3) Joseph Bailey & Jonn Axsen—Anticipating PEV buyer’s acceptance of utility-controlled charging.

4) Ekaterina Rhodes, Jonn Axsen & Mark Jaccard—Gauging citizen support for a low carbon fuel standard.

5) Jonn Axsen, Joseph Bailey, & Marisol Castro—Consumer heterogeneity in the potential early mainstream market for plug-in electric vehicles.

LNG Development in BC: Issues and Policy Options

Maxwell Sykes, Master of Resource Management candidate, is co-author of a new report that explores the nascent liquefied natural gas industry and provides policy recommendations. The report was co-authored by Dr. Thomas Gunton, Director of the Resource and Environmental Management Planning Program in the School of Resource and Environmental Management (REM), and Sean Broadbent, a PhD candidate also at REM.

LNG Development in BC: Issues and Policy Options synthesizes information and existing analyses into a comprehensive review of several important policy areas related to the industry. These include provincial and global GHG implications, air pollution, various risks associated with development, and the LNG royalty system, among others. Among the key findings, the authors found that BC’s LNG industry should not be positioned as a “climate solution” at home or abroad. The report will be released in October and be available on REM Planning Program website under publications: http://rem-main.rem.sfu.ca/planning/publications.php.

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EMRG NEWS

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EMRG News

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