

Partisanship, Partisan Context, and Local Climate Policy

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between partisanship and cities' approaches to climate policy. Do partisan patterns at the local level match those we observe at the national level? Whose partisanship matters: that of elected officials, citizens, or other actors? Previous research indicates that constraints created by the federal system dampen the effects of partisanship on many local policies. We hypothesize that given the absence of strong federal policy direction in the environmental policy arena, clear partisan differences should emerge at the local level. Employing data from a recent survey of local government officials, we find evidence that the specific constituencies targeted by a given policy affect whose partisanship matters. These effects remain robust after accounting for the broader partisan environment. These findings have important implications for our understanding of the determinants of local climate policy and for our growing knowledge of the influence of partisanship in local politics.