

Vasundhara Gaur

Applied Economist | Data and Policy Analysis | Renewable Energy, Land-use, and Environmental Justice

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Self-starter with 3+ years of post-Ph.D. experience doing quantitative research using multiple econometric techniques and software. Proven record of seeing projects through from inception to completion, including writing peer-reviewed publications, reports, and public presentation of results. Expertise and interests in environmental and resource economics, particularly policy-relevant analysis, environmental justice issues, distributional analysis, hedonic housing price analysis, discrete-choice surveys, and non-market valuation.

EXPERIENCE

Institute for Policy Integrity, New York University Law School

October 2023 - Present

Economic Fellow, Energy and Environmental Justice

- Collaborating with lawyers and writing comment letters to agencies regarding energy/environmental justice (co-authored 4 comment letters since January 2024).
- Producing scholarly work (1 working paper and 1 in-progress policy brief) on how agencies can conduct more rigorous distributional analyses.
- Engaging with community-based organizations and partners to provide technical and policy assistance by creating training materials through presentations.

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

July 2021 - August 2023

Postdoctoral Researcher

- Co-leader on project on local and global impacts of GM crop adoption on agricultural and environmental outcomes.
 - Constructed novel dataset by combining information scraped from 300+ webpages and the FAOSTAT dataset using Python,
 - Applied advanced econometric analysis skills by estimating models with quasi-experimental instrument variable (IV) regression for causal inference using R, and
 - Authored an academic paper (working paper) detailing the research results using Latex.
- Worked with faculty member to provide research advice to a final-year Ph.D. student and assisted them in writing and publishing an academic article.

University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

September 2019 - June 2021

Research Assistant to Corey Lang

- Created a novel dataset combining housing, electric utility, and land-use data for studying the impact of solar installations on housing prices. This analytical effort involved more than 1,000,000 observations and utilized hedonic valuation theory, geospatial data analysis methods in ArcGIS, and advanced difference-in-differences regression techniques in Stata. Authored (as first author) an academic paper that garnered over 30 citations within a year, and presented it at 3 international conferences with a combined audience of 100 people. Contributed to the writing of a successful government-funded (USDA) proposal on solar energy conflicts.
- Collaborated with economists from another institution to design and deploy a state-wide mixed-mode survey to 3,000 residents in Rhode Island using Qualtrics to measure consumer preferences for solar array attributes. I enhanced the survey's accuracy by conducting and leading 5 focus groups (with 6-8 participants in each) and analyzed outcomes using logistic regression techniques in Stata. Authored a published paper (as first author) and also a non-technical report discussing project results for a broader audience.
- Assisted in data collection and visualization of a survey examining utility-scale solar array siting preferences, involving over 400 responses; expedited analysis by conducting a literature review and authoring the paper discussing results.
- Participated in a project evaluating onshore wind turbines' impacts on housing prices, wherein I developed a unique dataset combining housing price data with wind turbine information, involving over 1 million observations. My skills in data analysis and literature review are supported by my role in this project, where my responsibilities included data processing, report writing, and literature review.

University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

May 2017 - August 2019

Research Assistant to Simona Trandafir

- Designed and implemented a survey on Qualtrics to understand tourists' recreational choices in the presence of United States' first offshore wind farm off the coast of Block Island. Organized and assisted in multiple focus groups to refine the survey. Conducted literature reviews and helped write published paper (as second author) of results.

University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

May 2017 - April 2020

Student Instructor and Mentor

- Worked closely with a faculty member to provide academic guidance to 3 Juniors about doing literature reviews and conducting focus groups.
- Helped a group of Senior students design an online survey on an internet platform (Qualtrics) for a capstone course, which significantly improved the quality of the project.
- Sole instructor of first-year graduate-level introductory mathematics course (Mathematics and Statistics for Economists).

EDUCATION

University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 2016 - 2021
Ph.D. Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, India 2013 - 2015
M.S. Economics

Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi, India 2010 - 2013
B.A. (Honours) Economics

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Programming software:** Stata (Advanced), R (Proficient), Python (Basic)
- **Spatial analysis software:** ArcGIS (Proficient), QGIS (Basic)
- **Other software:** Qualtrics, Tableau, LaTeX, MS Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint)

AWARDS AND HONORS

University of Rhode Island, USA 2021
Greg Lessne Award of Excellence: Recognized by faculty as the "Outstanding Environmental and Natural Resource Economics student who has studied the role of markets, marketing, or non-market valuation".

University of Rhode Island, USA 2020
Graduate School Dean's Fellowship: Competitive fellowship awarded by the university (based on faculty recommendations) to three graduate students with the most academic promise.

University of Rhode Island, USA 2019
Thomas Weaver Achievement Award: Recognized by faculty and peers as the "Environmental and Natural Resource Economics student that demonstrates high academic achievement and contributes to fellowship within the academic community".

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) University, New Delhi, India 2015
Gold Medal: Highest academic standing at the graduate level in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics.

WORK OUTPUTS

Publications

- Noack, F., Engist, D., Gantois, J., **Gaur, V.**, Hyjazie, B. F., Larsen, A., M'Gonigle, L.K., Missirian, A., Qaim, M., Sargent, R.D., Souza-Rodrigues, E., & Kremen, C. (2024). Environmental impacts of genetically modified crops. *Science*, 385(6712), eado9340.
- **Gaur, V.**, & Lang, C. (2023). House of the rising sun: The effect of utility-scale solar arrays on housing prices. *Energy Economics*, 122, 106699.
- Dong, L., **Gaur, V.**, & Lang, C. (2023). Property value impacts of onshore wind energy in New England: The importance of spatial heterogeneity and temporal dynamics. *Energy Policy*, 179, 113643.
- **Gaur, V.**, Howard, G., Lang, C., Quainoo, R. (2022). When Energy Issues are Land Use Issues: Estimating Preferences for Utility-Scale Solar Energy Siting. *Land Economics*
- Trandafir, S., **Gaur, V.**, Behanan, P., Uchida, E., Lang, C., and Miao, H. (2020). How Are Tourists Affected By Offshore Wind Turbines? A Case Study Of The First US Offshore Wind Farm. *Journal of Ocean and Coastal Economics*, 7(1), 1.
- **Gaur, V.**, & Gupta, E. (2016). The determinants of Electricity Theft: An Empirical Analysis of Indian States. *Energy Policy*, 93, 127-136.

Public Engagement

- Comments to EPA Science Advisory Board on Draft Peer Review Report on Draft Revised Environmental Justice Technical Guidance.
- Comments to New York DEC and NYSEDA on Draft Climate Act Disadvantaged Communities Investment and Benefits Reporting Guidance.
- Comments to NYSEDA on Proposed Cost-Effectiveness Test for Updates to the State Energy Conservation Construction Code.
- Comments to EPA on Draft Revision of Technical Guidance for Assessing Environmental Justice in Regulatory Analysis

Manuscripts under Review/Working Papers

- Quainoo, R., Howard, G., **Gaur, V.**, Lang, C., Model choice and framing effects: do discrete choice modeling decisions affect loss aversion estimates? (Revise and resubmit: *Journal of Choice Modelling*)
- **Gaur, V.**, Noack, F., Souza-Rodriguez, E., Impact of new crop technology adoption on a global scale.
- **Gaur, V.**, Howard, G., Lang, C., Are the loudest voices in the room different? Testing preferences for engaged vs. random samples.
- Lang, C. & **Gaur, V.**, The drivers of utility-scale solar siting preferences: Evidence from a municipal referendum.