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Energy security and climate change concerns: Triggers for energy policy change in the United States?

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Abstract

Why is it so difficult to change the energy policy status quo away from dependence on fossil fuels when the need to become less dependent on imported oil seems to be generally accepted by US politicians? In recent energy debates in the House and Senate, references to climate change and energy security were frequently used as a rationale for the need for energy policy change. But policymakers were not in agreement about what policy programs would be the best alternative or what goals the programs were to achieve in terms of addressing energy security or climate change, or both at the same time. The paper explores whether putting energy security and climate change on the decision making agenda simultaneously helped craft a political compromise in the 110th Congress—the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, and points out how the political institutions of the US structured interaction and affected policy outcome, and

ultimately the chance of changing the energy policy status quo.



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Keywords

Energy policy; Fossil fuel dependence; Climate change

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