

Title of Research Proposal: Law, Society and the Regulation of Low-Carbon Economies

Lay Title: How Society Can Help Law to Regulate Business Stakeholders in the Transition to Low-Carbon Economies

Law Abstract:

Project Descriptors: Law, Society, Regulation, Governance, Low-Carbon Economy, Policy, Canada

My research looks at the main role law plays in low-carbon transition, its limitations and how society can help law. Law regulates low-carbon transition in many countries. It directs how stakeholders and individuals advance low-carbon goals. The limitations of law are diverse. Experience from the UK, the US, Spain and Canada has shown us how it is difficult for new low-carbon laws to regulate economies already dominated by systems that favour oil, gas and mineral businesses, and even some low-carbon proponents oppose low-carbon laws that limit profit. To address these limitations, I believe that society can help law. My research asks how.

The research is important for at least two key reasons. First, it will examine the fairly new body of low-carbon laws in Canada, the challenges of these laws and how to address some of them. Second, it will tell us how people can regulate as part of civil society. Given these reasons, it will make us understand how law functions and the potential of society.

The research will be important for policy makers and civil society groups, legislators, lawyers, judges and researchers. For policy makers and civil society groups, it will guide their design and redesign of suitable mechanisms for low-carbon transition. For legislators, it will aid their design and amendment of low-carbon laws. For lawyers, judges and researchers, it will help them interpret and evaluate low-carbon regulation.

The research will lead to a dissertation, presentations, articles and a book. The dissertation is the primary output, and I will present my findings at suitable venues. I will also publish at least three articles: one reviewing the existing works on how to regulate low-carbon economies; another examining low-carbon laws and issues in Canada; and the third discussing how society regulates low-carbon transition through emerging governance mechanisms of civil society. I will do further work to turn the research into a book on low-carbon law and governance.